26749

National Library of Canada / Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE / THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* Sister Juliana Dusel

TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* Allegorical Imagery in The Ancren Riwle

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* University of Alberta

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* M. A.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* 1975

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* Dr. M. A. Whitaker

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

DATED/*DATÉ* August 1, 1975 SIGNED/*SIGNÉ* Sister Juliana Dusel

PERMANENT ADDRESS/*RÉSIDENCE FIXÉ* Loretto Convent,
1206 Temperance St.,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N ON9

NL-91 (3-74)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ALLEGORICAL IMAGERY IN

THE ANCREN RIWLE

by

SISTER JULIANA DUSEL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1975

© SISTER JULIANA DUSEL 1976

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled

ALLEGORICAL IMAGERY IN THE ANCREN RIWLE

submitted by SISTER JULIANA DUSEL

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in ENGLISH.

Muriel A. Whitaker
Supervisor

J. M. Kell

Jethro Bregenzer Reynolds

DATE July 30, 1975

TO

"mine leoue sustren"

LORETTO CONVENT

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

ABSTRACT

The allegorical imagery of medieval literature often poses a problem in comprehension for the modern reader. This study investigates the moral allegory used by the unidentified author of the Ancren Riwle in presenting his anchorite directives. It explores the sources of traditional images, interpreting their significance from original context as well as from derivative meanings. The study takes into account the religious sensitivity of the Middle Ages which led to the propagation of didactic allegory in a literary form of great skill.

Chapter One relates the imagery to the Christian homiletic tradition. It reviews the conventions of homiletic instruction, indicating the use of short, individual images rather than comprehensive allegories. The images involve an analogy followed by an explication from which the appropriate moral is drawn. Because of their aptness of analogy, certain figures are used repeatedly in homiletic works and are subsequently illustrated in iconographic representations. Conventionally these traditional images are revised by the homilist to relate to contemporary situations. As a result, implications of moral allegory include the influence of oral, written, artistic and contemporary sources.

The three chapters following deal with specific images in the Ancren Riwle. Chapter Two looks at the imagery used to convey the nature of the anchorite life. Popular homiletic images such as

the pelican and the anchor are adapted with appropriate explications by the author for this purpose. Most prominent among these images is the "bride of Christ" figure. Chapter Two examines this figure in its biblical origins and its use by the patristic writers, and discusses its specific application by the author to the anchorite life.

The Third Chapter investigates the allegory describing temptation. Images of warfare and chivalry are prevalent in the author's method of conveying the "attacks" of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Chapter Four shows how the author uses animal imagery to convey the nature of sin by contrasting man's behaviour with that of animals. This chapter emphasizes the attributes of specific animals chosen to symbolize the seven capital sins.

Chapter Five argues that moral allegory was effective as a teaching device in the Middle Ages because the religious fervour of the period provided a common cultural background in which the heritage of homiletic imagery was familiar. Besides this, the regular practice of explication immediately following the image as exemplified in the Ancren Riwle, clarified the meaning of the allegory. Whatever this moral allegory may represent to the modern mind, to the medieval mentality it was a serious prose of instruction.

PREFACE

The Ancren Riwle is an early Middle English devotional work comprising essentially a series of instructions for the religious life. It was composed specifically for three young ladies who had chosen to follow the anchorite vocation rather than enter one of the established communities of women. Since the three young anchoresses were not subject to contemporary monastic rules in this way of life, they apparently requested directives from a clerical friend, for at the beginning of the Riwle the author writes: "And ȝe, mine leoue sustren, habbeð moni dai iremd on me efter riwle" [And ye, my dear sisters, have oftentimes importuned me for a rule].[1] His resulting

---

[1] The Ancren Riwle, ed. James Morton (New York: AMS Press, 1968 [1853]), pp. 3-4. Morton's edition is based on the Nero Ms., collated with the Titus and Cleopatra Mss. The Morton edition is being used in this study for two reasons. In the first place, it supplies parallel texts--the complete Middle English wording on the even-numbered pages and a modern English translation on the opposite, odd-numbered pages. Although all passages quoted in the thesis are given in Middle English followed by the modern English translation, the Morton edition will be a convenient reference text for those not familiar with Middle English vocabulary who may wish to check the context of passages more fully. Secondly, almost all critical works dealing with the Ancren Riwle use the Morton edition. Of the few which use J. R. R. Tolkien's Ancrene Wisse (London: Oxford University Press, 1962, EETS 249) based on the Corpus Christi Ms., almost all give a cross reference to the pertinent passages in the Morton edition.

Throughout the thesis, quotations from the Ancren Riwle and from Morton are taken from this edition and are acknowledged by page numbers immediately following the passage or commentary.

compendium of rules has long been recognized for its literary merits as a prose selection.

Various aspects of this medieval prose work have received much scholarly attention. The title itself is a point of controversy. Its usual name, Ancren Riwle, was assigned to it by Morton in the edition he prepared for the Camden Society in 1853. Since none of the three manuscripts he used had titles, Morton named his edition by translating a Latin marginal note, "Regulae Inclusarum," added probably in the seventeenth century (Preface, p. v). When the Early English Text Society began to edit the various manuscripts after 1940, this title, "dubious linguistically and non-existent in any known medieval manuscript,"[2] was corrected in the genitive plural to Ancrene Riwle, though Morton's title persists for his edition. The Corpus Christi Ms. is the only one which bears a title of any sort and there it is Ancrene Wisse, the "mode of life of recluses." It is generally agreed, however, that this manuscript is an adaptation of the original Riwle, having been revised perhaps as early as 1230 for a larger community of nuns.[3] Geoffrey Shepherd maintains, moreover, that only Parts Six and Seven are correctly called Ancrene Wisse, citing as his authority a marginal rubric at the start of

---

[2] Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Ancrene Wisse vs. Ancren Riwle," ELH, 4 (1937), 113.

[3] See Ancrene Wisse, ed. J. R. R. Tolkien. This manuscript makes references throughout to a larger community of nuns than the original three anchoresses.

Part Six in the Corpus Christi Ms., which reads: "I þe feaderes 7 i þe sunes 7 i þe hali gastes nome, her beginneð ancrene wisse" [In the Father's and the Son's, and the Holy Ghost's name, here beginneth ancrene wisse].[4] In the critical works the title appears variously as Ancren Riwle, Ancrene Riwle, Ancrene Wisse, or as a modern English version of these names.[5]

The language of composition and identification of the original text are also topics of dispute among scholars. Morton tells us (Preface, p. vii ff.) that Dr. Thomas Smith's Catalogue of the Cottonian Library Manuscripts (1696) notes in the description of the Riwle manuscripts that the same book, in Latin, is in the library of Magdalen College, Oxford. On these grounds alone, apparently, Dr. Smith pronounced the Latin to be the original and the vernacular text merely a translation. Subsequent Catalogues which include the Riwle manuscripts repeat Dr. Smith's pronpuncement. After careful comparison of the Nero, Titus and Cleopatra texts with the Oxford Ms., however, Morton concludes that

> the vernacular text is the original, and the Latin a translation, in many parts abridged and in some enlarged, made at a comparatively recent period, when the language in which the work had been originally written was becoming obsolete.
> (Preface, p. viii)

---

[4] Ancrene Wisse: Parts Six and Seven, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1959), Intro., p. x.

[5] Cf. the Kings' Classics translation entitled The Nun's Rule (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966).

Morton cites numerous words and phrases erroneously translated or not translated at all (pp. viii-x). The word "bode" [an offer], for example, is translated as "corpus" [body] in the Latin (p. ix).

E. E. Bramlette takes up Morton's arguments regarding the so-called mistranslations by the Latin copyist and defends the Latin rendition word by word against Morton's charge of absurdity.[6] The dispute rests until some twenty years later when C. C. Macaulay, in a series of articles,[7] endeavours to establish French as the original language, though he concedes that the work was probably written in England. Macaulay disavows Bramlette's arguments, indicating that the extant Latin version in the Magdalen College Library is definitely associated with the name of Simon of Ghent, who died in 1315.[8] As Macaulay points out, this ascribes authorship of the Latin book to one who lived too late to have been the author of the English. He makes several other points, linguistic in nature, to show that Latin is not likely the original language. Because of certain references to friars and other theological points, Macaulay holds that the English Ancren Riwle must be thrown back to an earlier date than that of the earliest existing manuscripts. Using the French manu-

---

[6] Edgar Elliot Bramlette, "The Original Language of the Ancren Riwle," Anglia, 15 (1892), 478-98.

[7] G. C. Macaulay, "The Ancren Riwle," MLR, 9 (1914), 63-78; 145-60; 324-31; 463-74.

[8] Macaulay is referring to a Latin inscription in the Magdalen College Ms.

script Cotton Vitellius F[9] to show that the English has been rendered with some misunderstanding, Macaulay concludes: "In general . . . the French text supports what seem to be the original readings, as opposed to those of the manuscript followed by Morton."[10]

Macaulay is refuted, in turn, by R. W. Chambers, who argues that Macaulay's a priori probabilities for a French original are surely in favour of an English original.[11] In his discussion Chambers concurs with the comment made by J. Hall that "the English has all the vigour and raciness of an original work, while the French gives the impression of being unidiomatic and wanting in spontaneity."[12] Dorothy Dymes makes a more methodical study of Macaulay's arguments, dealing with each one specifically.[13] Like Chambers, she contends that the points Macaulay brings forth could be made to serve as arguments for an English original as well as a French one. Miss Dymes goes on to present her own evidence for an English original. Her

---

[9] This manuscript was only damaged, not destroyed, in a fire, as Morton had earlier maintained (Morton, Preface, p. vii).

[10] Macaulay, p. 70. He makes his comparison using the Nero Ms. as his English text. Macaulay believes that Morton did not know about the Cambridge Corpus Christi Ms. (used by Tolkien) when he prepared his 1853 edition.

[11] R. W. Chambers, "Recent Research Upon the Ancren Riwle," RES, 1 (1925), 4-23.

[12] J. Hall, Early Middle English, 1130-1250, Part II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 377.

[13] Dorothy M. E. Dymes, "The Original Language of the Ancren Riwle," Essays and Studies, 9 (1924), 31-49.

argument centres on a rhyming couplet in Latin which, in the English version, is translated by six rhyming lines of English, also in couplets.[14] She observes that the English couplets are

> not a literal translation, but a free and considerably expanded version. The writer has paraphrased the Latin freely, in order to get opportunity to bring in his rhymes.[15]

Miss Dymes also shows that the Latin couplet is paraphrased in the Latin manuscript as a literal version of the English lines, indicating that the Latin must have been translated from the English. In reviewing the same passage in the French manuscript, she reaches a similar conclusion:

> Again it is clear, from the rhymes and metre, of the English, and lack of both in Latin and French, that the French is a literal translation of the English. The astonishing fact stands out clearly that the existing versions, both in Latin and French, give the Latin couplet, and then proceed to translate, not the Latin, but the English writer's six lines of verse.[16]

---

[14] The couplets are given in Morton as follows:

"Mors tua, mors Domini; nota culpe, gaudia celi,
Judicii terror, figantur mente fideli."

Pench ofte mid sor of heorte o þine sunnen.
Pench ec of helle wo 7 of heoueriche wunnen.
Pench ek of þin owune deaðe 7 of Godes rode.
Nim ofte iðine mode þene grime dom of domesdei.
Pench eke hu uals is þes world, 7 hwuch beoð his meden.
Pench ec hwat tu owust God, uor his god deden.

[Think oft, with sorrow of heart, of thy sins.
Think also of the pains of hell, and of the joys of heaven.
Think also of thine own death, and of the cross of Christ.
Have oft in thy mind the fearful doom of the judgment day.
And think how false this world is, and what are its rewards.
Think also what thou owest God for his goodness.
(240-41)

[15] Dymes, Essays and Studies, 19 (1924), 32.

[16] Dymes, p. 34.

It has since been pointed out by Arne Zettersten, however, that a version of the English couplets is to be found in Seinte Marherete, where the Latin couplet is not included.[17] The existence of the couplet in Seinte Marherete implies that the English poem may have been generally known rather than having been composed by the author of the Ancren Riwle, a point which considerably weakens Miss Dymes' arguments. Her conclusions drawn from instances of mistranslations have also been refuted.[18] To date, therefore, there is no conclusive textual argument, although English is still favoured as the probable original.

The dialect of the English manuscripts is generally agreed to be South West Midland (Morton, pp. xviii-xxiii). It is similar to that found in La3amon's Brut, which has been dated c.1205 (Morton, p. xv). Shepherd identifies the dialect as a variety of Mercian associated with the twelfth-century Vespasian Psalter.[19] Hope Emily Allen relates the date and handwriting to an important religious movement in England:

> The extant copies of the "Katherine Group" and the earliest texts of the Ancren Riwle coincide, in date of handwriting, with an important recorded movement in

---

[17] Arne Zettersten, Studies in the Dialect and Vocabulary of the Ancrene Riwle, Lund Studies in English, No. 34 (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1965), p. 11.

[18] Mainly by H. Käsmann, Anglia, 75 (1957), 134 ff.; quoted in Zettersten, p. 11 ff.

[19] Shepherd, Ancrene Wisse, p. xv.

> religious history, when women of the highest Court connexions embraced the life of an anchoress. In this movement, women from the great West Country families bore a very important part.[20]

The precise date of composition, however, is most properly connected with the identity of the three young anchoresses and the cleric who wrote their rule. This identity has become the most pursued object of research among authorities on the Ancren Riwle, so that the following summary of their speculations represents but a brief account of the work done in this area.

In his Preface, Morton ventures the opinion that the original founder of the anchorage was Ralph de Kahaines, and that the house was at Tarente in Dorsetshire (p. xii). He notes, however, that Richard Poor, who lived a century after Kahaines, might also be called the "founder," having been a prominent benefactor of the house. Since Bishop Poor was born at Tarente and died there in 1237, he is, by timing and by learning, a likely personage to have written the Riwle. G. C. Macaulay contends, on the other hand, that the religious house at Tarente could not possibly be identified with the small community of three anchoresses for whom the Ancren Riwle was composed, since the convent in question was of the Cistercian order, presided over by an Abbess.[21] Macaulay cites as his authority a

---

[20] Hope Emily Allen, "The Localization of the Bodl. Ms. 34," MLR, 28 (1933), 487. See also Macaulay, p. 150; J. R. R. Tolkien, "Ancrene Wisse and Hali Meiðhad," Essays and Studies, 14 (1928), 104-126.

[21] Macaulay, p. 473. See Footnote 3, p. viii above.

Latin letter written by John Godard to his sister Margaret, "abbess of Tarente" while he was Abbot of Newenham.[22] The directions in this letter suggest an entirely different style of living from that which was followed by the three sisters of the Ancren Riwle.

In 1916 Vincent McNabb, O. P., published an article in which he attempts to prove that:

> (1) the Ancren Riwle was written by an English Dominican Friar and (2) this English Dominican Friar was probably Friar Robert Bacon, O. P.[23]

Father McNabb bases his argument on the similarity between the prayers and devotions of the Ancren Riwle and those of the Rule of St. Dominic. Referring to Morton's edition, McNabb draws attention to the "lay brothers' prayers" (Morton, p. 24) and to a list of the fifteen days lay brothers may receive Holy Communion (Morton, p. 412), indicating the correspondence with prayers and communion days recommended for lay brethren in the Dominican Rule. With regard to the "Order of St. James,"[24] McNabb relates this designation to the Dominicans, recalling that members of the latter were called Jacobites after their famous convent of St. Jacques in Paris. His argument for establishing Robert Bacon as author is somewhat weaker, however, for he merely

---

[22] The letter is in Dugdale's Monasticon, ed. 1846, V, 690. Godard ceased to be Abbot in 1248.

[23] Vincent McNabb, O. P., "The Authorship of the Ancren Riwle," MLR, 11 (1916), 1. I follow throughout Father McNabb's evidence for this theory.

[24] "Gif eni unweote acseð ou of hwat ordre 3e beon . . . onswerieð ⁊ siggeð þe, 3e beoð of seint Iames ordre" [If any ignorant person ask you of what order you are . . . answer and say that ye are of the order of Saint James] (Morton, pp. 8-9).

refers to the "English tone" of the Ancren Riwle, and points out that Robert Bacon was one of the leaders against the Angevins. Later in the article he develops the historical claim that "Robert Bacon was a famous and unconquerable opponent of the Poitevins."[25] As his strongest evidence, McNabb notes that the only personal anecdote which appears in the Ancren Riwle[26] appears also in Robert Bacon's life of St. Edmund.

Father McNabb's article initiated an active controversy which continued almost twenty years, involving some of the most renowned authorities on the Ancren Riwle. His statement of authorship was refuted in 1918 by Hope Emily Allen.[27] In her lengthy article, Miss Allen sets forth her own conviction that the three young anchoresses were those placed in Kilburn hermitage about 1134. This identity requires a much earlier date for the Riwle than the lifetime of Robert Bacon. In reply, Father McNabb argues that the frequent use of the Ave Maria as a prayer makes it impossible to date the Ancren Riwle earlier than c.1230.[28] He insists, again, upon the obvious Augustinian spirit in the Riwle. In her second article on the

---

[25] McNabb, p. 25.

[26] "Ich wot ec swuche wummon þet poleð lute lesse" [I know also a woman of like mind who suffereth little less] (Morton, pp. 382-83).

[27] Hope Emily Allen, "The Origin of the Ancren Riwle," PMLA, 26 (1918), 474-546. Miss Allen's identities are discussed more fully following the review of the McNabb arguments.

[28] Vincent McNabb, O.P., "Further Light on the Ancren Riwle," MLR, 15 (1920), 406-409.

Kilburn theory, Miss Allen refutes Father McNabb's claim that the Augustinian influence makes it Augustinian:

> The truth is that we find reflected in the Ancren Riwle an unsectarian, eclectic spirit akin to that which, in the same decade in which Kilburn was founded, produced the Gilbertine Order. The Gilbertine men were Augustinian, the women Benedictine, and the lay-brothers Cistercian.[29]

R. W. Chambers concurs with Miss Allen's views in refuting Father McNabb's claim.[30] McNabb, however, renews his insistence that "a manuscript [which] contains the Office of Our Lady wherein every Hour begins and ends with the Ave Maria has to be Dominican."[31] He asserts also that the "Maria psalms" devotion with its tally of Aves (Morton, pp. 38-39) was initiated by Jordon of Saxony, the successor of St. Dominic and friend of Robert Bacon. On the basis of medieval philosophy and theology, he shows that the method of saying the Pater Nosters as a devotion was established later than the twelfth century. In the same publication, immediately following McNabb's article, Chambers has published a letter from Herbert Thurston, S. J., whose theological advice had been solicited regarding McNabb's claims.[32]

---

[29] Hope Emily Allen, "The Ancren Riwle and Kilburn Priory," MLA, 16 (1921), 318.

[30] R. W. Chambers, "Recent Research Upon the Ancren Riwle," RES, 1 (1925), 4-23.

[31] Vincent McNabb, "Further Research Upon the Ancren Riwle," RES, 2 (1926), 82-85.

[32] R. W. Chambers, under "Notes and Observations," RES, 2 (1926), 85-89.

Father Thurston refutes the Dominican claim, but sets the date for the Ancren Riwle later than Miss Allen does, at least after 1190, on the basis of the Eucharistic development and the elevation of the Host at Mass (Morton, 16-17; 32-33; 268-69). In a subsequent commentary, Father Thurston points out that the Ave Maria at the beginning and end of the Office, which McNabb presents as evidence of Dominican origin, meant only the Ave, not also the Pater, as given in the Ancren Riwle.[33] Regarding the Maria psalms and Jordon of Saxony, Thurston says:

> Thomas of Chantimpre', also a Dominican and a contemporary of Jordon's, traces the practice to a monk Jobertus, who died in 1186 . . . . The Maria psalms were no more peculiar to Jordon than the prayer O intemerata was peculiar to St. Edmund of Canterbury, or the Anima Christi peculiar to St. Ignatius of Loyola. In each of these cases the devotion was of much older date than the lifetime of the person to whom it is attributed.[34]

Thurston ends his rebuttal by stating that he is not averse to the idea of a Dominican as author, but that "the case is not made out."[35] He agrees that the fifteen communion days for lay brethren might be a serious argument. After this article, however, Father McNabb ceases to press his Dominican claims.

Miss Allen's initial statement in her article of 1918 identifies the three young anchoresses as Emma, Gunhilda and Christina,

> to whom, according to the Charter printed by Dugdale, the hermitage of Kilburn with its appurtenances was

---

[33] Herbert Thurston, under "Notes and Observations," RES, 2 (1926), 199-201.

[34] Thurston, p. 200.

[35] Thurston, p. 201

> granted by the Abbot and convent of Westminster sometime between the years 1127 and 1135.[36]

In her second article she stresses that her theory regarding the connection between the Ancren Riwle and Kilburn Priory

> derives its material from legal documents, and, if accepted, would anchor the treatise to a date, a place, and a group, with consequent great effect on the study of history, of literature, and of liturgy.[37]

She concludes that the author of the Riwle was "probably a congenial friend of St. Gilbert and of St. Aelred, but he certainly found his closest affiliations with Peter the Venerable, the apologist for the older Benedictines."[38]

In a later article Miss Allen suggests that the author is almost certainly the master of the anchorage and confessor to the three young anchoresses.[39] After citing several passages which seem to indicate that he was a secular priest rather than a monk, she

---

[36] Hope Emily Allen, "The Origin of the Ancren Riwle," PMLA, 26 (1918), 474.

[37] Hope Emily Allen, "The Ancren Riwle and Kilburn Priory," MLA, 16 (1921), 321.

[38] Allen, p. 322. Peter the Venerable (c.1092-1156) became General of the Benedictine Order at Cluny in 1122 and carried out many monastic reforms. Gilbert of Sempringham (c.1089-1189) founded the Order of Sempringham c.1131, the only medieval monastic congregation to originate in England; its members were called Gilbertines. Aelred of Rievaulx (c.1109-1166), whose name is also written Ailred, Æthelred and Ethelred, was a Cistercian monk. He was elected Abbot of Rievaulx in 1146.

[39] Hope Emily Allen, "On the Author of the Ancren Riwle," PMLA, 44 (1929), 635-80.

points out that "Kilburn was first an unclassified house of inclusae, under a hermit who was probably a secular priest."[40] She speculates that the Corpus Christi Ms. must have been written for the reconstruction which took place at Kilburn in 1231, and accordingly, that the author was

> almost certainly therefore Godwin, hermit of Kilburn, who was probably a secular priest in late middle life. That he must have been a person of a distinguished past of some sort no reader of the treatise can doubt, or that his experience had lain among people as well as among books: he seems to present at once the finest academic and worldly culture, something so advanced and often even permanent that he must have been in touch with the very vanguard of the civilization of his day.[41]

To support her theory regarding Kilburn's original status of "unclassified," Miss Allen points out the disrepute into which the monasteries had fallen just before the time of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, with the result that many would-be Religious lived lives of poverty and solitary penance rather than become monks. She cites passages in the Riwle where a distinction is made between the three anchoresses and nuns in a convent[42] and where the author indicates an

---

[40] Allen, pp. 642-43.

[41] Allen, pp. 643-44

[42] Allen, p. 645. Regarding uniformity of clothing and in other outward things the author of the Riwle says, "pus hit is i kuuent" [thus it is in a convent]. He goes on to show that for anchorites it is not necessary to have uniformity in these exterior things (Morton, pp. 12-13).

acquaintance with other women living as anchoresses.[43] To account for Kilburn's reconstruction, she maintains that many anchorages or hermitages became monastic after various monastic reformations. In conclusion, she points out that her article "has brought forth parallels with Peter the Venerable, who . . . (though probably never known personally to the author) must have belonged to the same contemporary school of thought."[44]

Miss Allen carries her identification a step further by attempting to show that Deorman, an Anglo-Saxon thane of William the Conqueror, is the father of Emma, Christina and Gunhilda.[45] While certain pieces of evidence promote this theory--there is an older brother Ordgar who is a cleric and their house is connected with a men's order--Miss Allen herself concedes it may be an improbable connection, since it requires that Deorman have left a second family of very young children for the identities to fit. Her theory connecting the daughters of Deorman with the three sisters of the Ancren Riwle has now generally been rejected, and up to the present time no other plausible speculation on this matter has been formulated.

---

[43] Allen, p. 645. The author of the Riwle says, "Ȝe, mine leoue sustren, beoð þeo ancren þet ich iknowe, þet habbeð lest neode to uroure aȝean þeos temptaciuns" [Ye, my dear sisters, of the anchoresses that I know, are those who have least need to be fortified against these temptations] (Morton, pp. 192-193).

[44] Allen, p. 680.

[45] In a letter to the editor ("The Tortington Chartulary," TLS, Feb. 14, 1935, p. 92), she asks for information regarding Deorman. Her evidence for the identity is outlined in "The Three Daughters of Deorman," PMLA, 50 (1935), 899-902.

Despite the absence of a positive identification, however, there are noteworthy references to the anchoresses' lives contained in the work itself. From the treatise we learn that the anchoresses are blood sisters, young, and of a gentle station in life. The author writes:

> Muche word is of ou hu gentile wummen ȝe beoð: vor godleic ⁊ for ureoleic iȝerned of monie: ⁊ sustren of one ueder ⁊ of one moder, ine blǫstme of ower ȝuweðe, uorheten alle worldes blissen, ⁊ bicomen ancren.
>
> [There is much talk of you, how gentle women you are; for your goodness and nobleness of mind beloved of many; and sisters of one father and of one mother; having, in the bloom of your youth, forsaken all pleasures of the world and become anchoresses.]
>
> (192-93)

Various observations in the Riwle enable us to visualize their physical situation. The anchoresses live under the same roof as the church, for the author reminds them that they have Christ with them day and night:

> ȝe habbeð þet ilke blod, ⁊ tet ilke blisfule bodi þet com of þe meidene, ⁊ deiede oðe rode, niht ⁊ dei bi ou. Nis þer buten a wal bitweonen.
>
> [ye have with you, night and day, the same blood and the same blessed body that came of the maiden and died on the cross, there is only a wall intervening.]
>
> (262-63)

Although they dwell under one roof, they are restricted, apparently, to separate cells, sending messages to one another by their attendant maids. This fact comes to light in the instruction to admonish one another kindly:

> Euerich [on] noðeleas warnie oðer, þuruh ful siker sondesmon, sweteliche ⁊ luueliche, ase hire leoue suster, of þinge þet heo misnimeð, ȝif heo hit wot to soðe, ⁊ makie so þeo þet bereð þet word recorden hit ofte biuoren hire, er heo go ut, hwu heo wule siggen.

[Nevertheless, let every one of you, by a trusty messenger, warn each other sweetly and affectionately, as her dear sister, of any thing that she doth wrong, if she know it with certainty, and cause the person who beareth the message repeat it often in her presence before she go out.]
(256-57)

None of this information, however, sets the three sisters of the Riwle apart from other anchoresses of their time. Living conditions of this kind were not unusual for Religious of medieval England, according to a description given by W. R. Inge:

> In the Middle Ages, England was full of persons who in one form or another had taken religious vows. Besides the larger monasteries and convents, there were numerous "anchorages" for solitary women, some in the open country, but more in the vicinity of a church. The cell of the anchoress, which was often built against the church wall or in a church-yard, sometimes contained more than one apartment, for the recluse usually had one, or even two, servants to attend upon her. She herself never left the walls of her cell, which had no means of egress, except by the windows. Even the window which opened towards the outside was generally covered by a heavy curtain.[46]

Nor, indeed, is the daily observance of the three sisters markedly different from contemporary practice. The Riwle is, in the main, a practical guide in the ordering of their lives, a compendium whose rules and good advice are not unlike other medieval works of this nature. As Shepherd points out in his edition of the Ancrene Wisse:

> There are several medieval anchorite rules in existence, written like the English Rule by a spiritual adviser for the benefit of his charge or charges. The earliest appears to be that of Grimlaic of Metz (c.900) . . . but a dozen or so of various sorts are of a date earlier than the thirteenth century. Usually these rules are no more than a daunting set of paragraphs on outward observances.[47]

---

[46] William Ralph Inge, Studies of English Mystics: St. Margaret's Lectures, 1905 (London: John Murray, 1906), p. 40.

[47] Shepherd, Intro., p. xxxvi.

It is not so much the theological instruction contained therein which makes the Ancren Riwle more worthy of note than similar writings, but rather the merit of its prose style. From a literary point of view, the nature of the language in which directions are conveyed is of great artistic achievement.

The specific aspect of the Ancren Riwle being considered in this thesis is the allegorical method used to present rules and directions. While Parts One and Eight of the Riwle are simple and colloquial, the intervening sections containing the instructions on morality are characterized by imagery displaying considerable literary skill. Although the scope of this thesis does not permit a discussion of each of the images set forth in the Riwle, an appendix provides a summary and an indication of their abundance. The images discussed below are those most fully developed and those deemed most relevant to the Riwle's central purpose.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness for the help I received in preparing this thesis:

TO Professor M. A. Whitaker, who first suggested the topic to me and who guided the work to its completion.

TO Professor L. N. McKill, who offered many valuable suggestions regarding both style and content.

TO the Sisters of my Religious Community, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who afforded me the time, the financial assistance and the moral support to complete this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Abstract		v
Preface		vii
Acknowledgements		xxv
Chapter		
I	The Nature of the Imagery	1
II	Imagery of the Anchorite Life	28
III	Imagery of Temptation	52
IV	Imagery of Sin	77
V	Conclusion	108
Bibliography		121
Appendix		131

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE IMAGERY

Literature intended for moral instruction must do more than enlighten the mind of the reader by clarifying scripture and doctrine; it must also influence his will by touching his affections and emotions. Along with an expository nature it must have a persuasive dimension which constantly urges the reader towards good. Such literature has traditionally resorted to imagery as a mode of expression, achieving by its metaphoric manner a power of representation and a depth of sentiment which could not otherwise be attained. This method of moral instruction is exemplified in the Ancren Riwle, where the author habitually teaches through images designed for both elucidation and persuasion. In content as well as in manner of presentation, the imagery of the Riwle illustrates the long-established conventions of moral instruction collectively known as the Christian homiletic tradition. Only in relation to this heritage of instructional materials can the full implications of the Riwle's imagery to the medieval mind be shown. It will be useful at the outset, therefore, to review briefly the development and the conventions of the homiletic tradition.

The evolution of the homily as an important form of Christian literature includes the influence of oral, written, artistic and contemporary sources. At the root of the tradition are the extensive

exegetical writings which began at least as far back as the law books of the old dispensation. In his treatise on Old Testament teachings, Father John McKenzie shows the necessity for exegeses of the biblical literature, pointing out that such works existed long before the time of the New Testament:

> The Pentateuch is a code of laws incorporated in a narrative of the origins of Israel. These laws were conceived to be a complete guide to a life perfectly submitted to the will of God. Actually the Law is not such a complete guide; and it could become such a guide only by a complex process of interpretation, expansion, and application to cases not explicitly covered. By the beginning of the New Testament period the Law had long been an object of study through techniques which had become professionalized.[1]

The pharisees of this early period attempted, on the whole, a literal interpretation of scripture, but their method was opposed by Christian writers of the first three centuries. These so-called "Apostolic Fathers" used an allegorical method of interpretation to explain the more difficult books of the Old Testament. The Book of Genesis, for example, was viewed in its entirety as a history of the soul from its formation in the intelligible world to the complete development of wisdom after its fall and its restoration by repentance. One discerns in the Biblical characters and their actions, therefore, some phase either in the fall or the restoration of the soul.[2] This allegorical understanding of scripture, having been

---

[1] John L. McKenzie, S. J., The Power and the Wisdom: An Interpretation of the New Testament (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965), p. 19.

[2] See "Philo," The Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1911), XII, 23.

initiated by the non-Christian, Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c.25 B. C.-c.50 A. D.), was used extensively by the Christian theologians of Alexandria. Origen (c.185-253), one of the most renowned Apostolic Fathers and a student of the Alexandrian school, became a strong proponent of the allegorical method. In his writings, Origen uses symbolic interpretation as a means of overcoming the difficulties occasioned by the strict literal sense. Given the circumstances of time and place, this method of biblical exegesis had distinct advantages, as Quasten points out:

> In the age of Clement and Origen and in the centre of Hellenistic learning, it had the great advantage of opening a vast field to nascent theology and of allowing the fertile contact of Greek philosophy and revelation. In addition, it contributed to the solution of the most significant problem posed for the early Church, i.e., the meaning to be given to the Old Testament.[3]

An inclination to neglect the literal sense of scripture, however, brought about a strong reaction from other scholastic groups, and

---

[3] Johannes Quasten, Patrology: The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1964 [1953]), II, 3-4. On Origen and allegorical interpretation see Quasten, II, 1-90; William Ralph Inge, Christian Mysticism (New York: World Publishing Co., 1964 [1956]), p. 83. Clement (150-c.215) was a Greek Christian theologian of the Alexandrian School. The Hellenistic learning to which Quasten refers pertains especially to the Greek philosophers who used allegorical interpretation to explain the myths and fables about the gods as they appear in Homer and Hesiod. For comments on the exegesis of the stoics see C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 [1936]), pp. 44-111; Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods, trans. Barbara F. Sessions (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), pp. 84-85. Seznec also traces the allegorical exegesis of the Church Fathers, pp. 85-90, and allegory in the twelfth century, pp. 90-93.

notably from the theological school at Antioch.[4] The scholars at Antioch dedicated themselves to the task of interpreting scripture literally, and within the space of about one hundred years the allegorical interpretations of such early proponents as Philo and Origen were condemned.[5] As a result of this opposition, the later Alexandrians mitigated their position of scriptural interpretation, using allegorical exegesis only for purposes of edification. The analogical descriptions of the earlier Alexandrian writers persisted, however, and the strong tendency towards metaphoric expression in later devotional literature may be attributed largely to their influence.

In the fourth century, after religious persecution by the State had been eliminated,[6] the period of the great "Church Fathers" began, the "golden age of ecclesiastical literature."[7] Quasten describes the literary activity of this period as follows:

---

[4] Founded by Lucian (d.c.290 A. D.).

[5] Notable opponents were Diodore of Tarsus (d.c.391), Theodore of Mopsuestia (d.c.428), St. John Chrysostom (d.407). For accounts of their writings see Johannes Quasten, Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon (Utrecht/Antwerp: Spectrum Publishers, 1966 [1960]), III, 397-481.

[6] By Constantine's Edict of Milan, 313. Christianity flourished under the patronage of Theodosius I who, during his reign as Emperor of Rome (379-95), took severe measures against the surviving remnants of paganism.

[7] Quasten, III, 1.

> The victory of the Christian religion [was] accompanied by wholesale assimilation of secular learning and education and unrestricted appropriation of traditional literary forms. Thus the classical authors of the Greek Church like Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus combine[d] excellent theological training with Hellenistic culture, with brilliant eloquence and a mastery of style learnt in the ancient schools and academies. A Christian humanism was born in which ecclesiastical literature reached its perfection.[8]

Along with exegetical exposition, the literature of this period explained Christian doctrine through dogmatic discourses, polemic writings and ascetical treatises. These patristic authors, writing mainly for learned contemporaries even in their homilies, dealt with Christian doctrine in a more complex manner than the ordinary Christian could understand. To teach the growing congregations of the Faithful, therefore, the lesser clergy developed a less sophisticated sermon literature for conveying the abstract and nebulous concepts of a young Christian Church. Using the analogical descriptions of the Church Fathers and the allegorical interpretations of the Apostolic Fathers as source material, these lesser clergy simplified the images. More importantly, they extended the imagery to include explications and applications. The thrust of their homilies was edification, and for this they provided a moral application along with their exegetical interpretation. The homily slowly evolved, therefore, as an instructional treatise having a practical purpose rather than a dogmatic one.

---

[8] Quasten, III, 1. Basil the Great (c.330-c.379) was a Cappadocian Church Father and Bishop of Caesarea; his brother Gregory (331-396) was Bishop of Nyssa. Gregory of Nazianzus was Bishop of Constantinople while Theodosius was emperor of Rome (379-95).

While the authority of the patristic writers remained, their learned works were reproduced and rearranged according to the needs of the teaching Church. Altaner describes the assimilation of these works as follows:

> Theologians . . . came to depend more and more on the authority of the Church Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, until finally traditionalism, which was only concerned to hand on the teachings of the Fathers and renounced new achievements, was interested in collecting and arranging the products of the intellectual labours of the past, for easier use.[9]

The patristic writings, along with their paraphrases, commentaries, and homiletic derivations--a "Christianized classical tradition," as Malone calls them[10]--had been brought to England by Augustine and his Roman missionaries in 597, and reproduced there in Latin and English by the converts and their sons. These works, along with the compositions of such prominent scholars as Bede and his Benedictine contemporaries, were translated into English as part of King Alfred's educational program designed to rebuild the English culture ruined by the Danish invasions.[11] Through the efforts of Alfred and his translators a literary vernacular prose tradition was established which

---

[9] Berthold Altaner, Patrology, 2nd ed., trans. Hilda C. Graef (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961), pp. 549-50.

[10] Kemp Malone, and Albert C. Baugh, The Middle Ages in A Literary History of England, ed. A. C. Baugh (New York: Appleton, 1967 [1948]), I, 96. I paraphrase Malone, pp. 96-105, throughout the paragraph.

[11] The Venerable Bede (c.672-735), a Benedictine monk of Yarrow, was probably the most learned man of his time; his most renowned work is The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, though he also wrote a great many exegetical works and homilies. Alfred the Great was king of Wessex, 871-899, and of England, 886-899.

reached maturity in the late tenth and eleventh centuries with the reform movement, led in England by Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald.[12] By the time of the reform movement a vast heritage of Christian literary materials was already available for the composition and compilation of numerous homiletic works.[13] The efforts of the monasteries were now directed toward the study and exposition of spiritual doctrine so that Christian instruction might be brought within the reach of people who could not have recourse directly to the Fathers. It is said of Aelfric of Eynsham, for example, that his writings were designed expressly for the lower clergy and the people at large, and for this purpose they presented "practical and easily intelligible doctrinal instructions."[14] The reform movement led to a religious fervour and a strong English piety which reached its height in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The homily became a popular form of literature in those centuries.

---

[12] Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (d.988); Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester (d.984); Oswald, Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York (d.992).

[13] On the development of religious literature in England, especially religious prose, see R. W. Chambers, On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School, EETS 186A (London: Oxford University Press, 1932); R. W. Chambers, "Recent Research Upon the Ancren Riwle," RES, 1 (1925), 4-23 (especially 11-12); Ian A. Gordon, The Movement of English Prose (London: Longmans, Green), pp. 3-57; R. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 3rd ed. (London: Methuen, 1968 [1st ed. 1939]), pp. 3-20.

[14] "Aelfric of Eynsham," by A Benedictine of Stanbrook (D. S. H.) in English Spiritual Writers, ed. Charles Davis (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 2. Among his works, Aelfric (c.955-c.1025) includes two sets of Catholic Homilies or sermons suitable for delivery on the Sundays and chief feasts of the liturgical year.

It is during this period of monastic activity and general religious fervour that the Ancren Riwle was formulated. The basic content as well as the structural elements of the Riwle have their origin in the homiletic materials of that time. Throughout the treatise there is a pervasive scriptural imagery augmented by the exegetical writings, mainly, of St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory.[15] Along with these earlier sources, the author uses extensively the homilies of prominent contemporary theologians, notably those of St. Bernard, St. Anselm, and St. Ailred.[16]

While the learned author of the Ancren Riwle uses these works of antiquity extensively, his "borrowings" are acknowledged only in the broadest terms, with rarely a mention of the specific works

---

[15] St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), is quoted by the author on the following pages: 138, 206, 232, 246, 306, 328, 330, 332, 336, 338, 374, 386. St. Jerome (347-c.420) is mentioned on pages 80, 162, 332, 420. St. Gregory, called "the Great" (Pope, 590-604), is referred to on pages 72, 74, 76, 92, 232, 272, 328, 386, 408. The reference on p. 76 mentions Gregory's Dialogues, one of the few specific references in the Ancren Riwle.

[16] St. Bernard (1091-1153), Abbot of Clairvaux, is widely influential in the Riwle. Besides the recurrent use of Bernard's Commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles, the author tells us at the beginning of the Sixth part that "hit is almost Seint Beornardes Sentence" [for it is nearly all from the Sentences of St. Bernard] (348-49). The Riwle's lengthy dissertation on Penance follows closely the teachings of Bernard in his Liber Sententiarum, the Seventh Lenten Sermon. Other references to Bernard are on pages 62, 330, 354. St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) is mentioned on pages 70, 304. Ailred of Rievaulx (c.1109-1166) wrote to his sister sometime between 1131-61 giving her instructions on the religious life of women. Ailred's document, called variously De Vita eremitica and Epistola ad Sororem Inclusam, was used by the author of the Riwle, who acknowledges his indebtedness to Ailred on p. 368.

from which they are taken. We find in his treatise only vague general references in the prefatory phrases, "as Gregory says," or "as Anselm teaches."[17] Beryl Smalley discusses the casual mention of sources in her comments on the evolution of Biblical studies. She points out that the scholars who, following Bede, set out to make patristic tradition available and intelligible were less scientific than Bede:

> Instead of taking their quotations from the original patristic writers, they were apt to enlarge existing sets of Fathers, or their memories of oral teaching derived from the Fathers, or to employ pupils to collect extracts for them.[18]

Miss Smalley shows that the original exegeses of the Fathers were passed on at third or fourth hand without attribution. This practice was widespread during the reform movement as well, where the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, Bede and other acknowledged authorities were abridged and rewritten in preparing homilies for the unlearned. As Malone points out in reference to Aelfric's prose:

---

17 See, for example, page 72: "Seneca seide" and "ase seint Gregorie seið." There is no indication of the specific work in either case.

18 Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 38. Bede himself was careful to preserve such references: "A very remarkable trait . . . is [Bede's] sense of literary property, an extraordinary thing in that age. He himself scrupulously noted in his writings the passages he had borrowed from others and he even begs copyists of his works to preserve the references, a recommendation to which they, alas, have paid but little attention." ("Bede," Catholic Encyclopedia, II, 385).

> For sources Aelfric drew on the abundant stock of sermons and other religious writings available in Latin; he made particular use of Gregory, Bede, and Augustine. He treated his sources with great freedom, adapting the material to the needs of English pastor and flock.[19]

Because of this practice, it is almost impossible to identify exactly the materials with which the author of the Ancren Riwle worked. The images he uses were seemingly all popular in the spiritual literature of the Middle Ages, and they may have been taken from any one of the works of expositors. Through naming Church Fathers and theologians, however, the author achieves a certain authority which contributes to the persuasive force of his teachings.

As the homiletic tradition developed, certain conventions regarding the use of imagery were established. The imagery is allegorical, involving the representation of an abstraction in some tangible form. In this way the more difficult aspects of Christian doctrine find expression in images of plants, animal and human types, or in analogies with inanimate objects, places, or situations. The allegory used by the early exegetes in their scriptural commentaries was characterized by four levels of meaning which may be described briefly as follows. The literal level implies a reading of the material as written, with no further overtones of meaning. On the allegorical level, a figurative application is made to Christ and the Church Militant. The image on its tropological level is interpreted with respect to the soul and its virtues, and so with moral perfection or the proper conduct of life. The anagogical interpretation, finally,

---

[19] Malone, The Middle Ages, p. 101.

takes the writings to mean the heavenly realities and the Church Triumphant.[20] In allegory of this kind, the reader must strive to see the situation on its various levels of meaning in order to grasp the full implications of the individual images. This is not to say that every image need have the full range of exegetical interpretations, however, since each of the "allegorical" levels is fundamentally independent of the other. The instructional significance of a particular image may pertain only to two of the four levels--the literal level and one other, since each analogy has at least one doctrinal, or higher meaning. To medieval readers, familiar as they were with this method of allegory, the images of the Ancren Riwle probably evoked different levels of interpretation simultaneously. Though aware of the literal meaning, since the basis of the analogy lies on this level, they were conditioned by convention to see the allegorical meanings which conveyed the abstract attributes of a given concept.

Unlike comprehensive allegories where the context of a continuous narrative gives significance to the figures and actions employed,[21] allegory in the homiletic writings is usually contained in a series of individual images, each followed by a careful and

---

[20] For discussion of the four-fold allegory see "Epistola X: to Can Grande Della Scala (c.1319)" in Dantis Alagherii Epistolae, trans. Paget Toynbee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 199; E. C. Knowlton, "Notes on Early Allegory," JEGP, 29 (1930), 159-81; Robert Worth Frank, Jr., "The Art of Reading Medieval Personification-Allegory," English Literary History, 20 (1953), 237-50.

[21] For example, The Romance of the Rose, Piers the Ploughman, The Owl and the Nightingale, Pearl, Chaucer's House of Fame.

often lengthy explanation. Admittedly, certain of the images, by virtue of their nature or by conventional usage, may be employed without further explication since the mere mention conjures up all the attributes with which that image has been endowed by tradition. For such abstractions the author of the Riwle has no need to create either allegorical figures or explications, since tradition has supplied them. For example, his reference, without explication, to the "al holi chirche, pet is schip icleoped" [the Holy Church Universal, which is called a ship] (142-43) implies that this was a well-known image for which the medieval mind could immediately supply a helmsman, a rudder and an anchor. This image, in fact, is one of the earliest analogies, having long since taken on the status of a symbol, as the Oxford Guide to the early Christian and Byzantine antiquities shows:

> The Ship is the symbol of the Church in which the faithful are borne safely over the sea of life to the haven of eternity; sometimes rowers and steersmen are visible, but at others only the oars are seen. Occasionally it is accompanied by other symbols such as the dolphin or the sacred monogram.[22]

In such imagery there is no sophisticated distinction between allegory

---

[22] A Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities, 2nd ed., printed by order of the Trustees (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 77. G. R. Owst in Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1933) traces the allegorical figure of the ship from its earliest use as an image of the Church to its satirical usage in which the Church is pictured as the "Ship of fools" (pp. 68-76). See also Gertrude Jobes, Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols, Parts I & II (New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1962), p. 1438; Clara Erskine Clement, A Handbook of Legendary and Mythological Art (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1873), p. 6.

and symbol, since the allegorical images are a type of self-explanatory symbolism. More often, however, an explication is necessary. Even for commonplace figures of the homiletic writings, there is not one set of interpretations which holds whenever the image is used, but rather a variety of meanings, depending on the purpose of the individual author. Conforming with this general tradition, the Ancren Riwle furnishes a series of allegorical images which require, and receive, explication.

The conventional pattern of the homilist consists in giving a biblical quotation followed immediately by an explication in the form of an allegorical interpretation describing one or more of the three levels of mystical meaning. This manner of exegesis is pointed out by numerous commentators on medieval allegory. Charles Baldwin says, for example:

> A commonplace of medieval preaching was to expound a text literally in the immediate meaning shown by the context, then morally for its typical significance in conduct, then mystically for its vision of divine providence. Warrant was found not only in parables, but also in apostolic teachings.[23]

The manner of instruction used by the author of the Riwle typifies this method of the homiletic convention. Habitually he quotes a scriptural text or a passage from the patristic material, explains the passage as it occurs, then draws attention to other points of

---

[23] Charles Sears Baldwin, Three Medieval Centuries of Literature in England: 1100-1400 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1932), p. 173. Geoffrey Shepherd notes: "The homilists had developed a characteristic technique, as is indicated by the numerous Artes praedicandi which appeared in the thirteenth and following centuries" (Ancrene Wisse, p. lix). See also Beryl Smalley, Study of the Bible, pp. 1-36.

comparison evoked by its context. By a mental process of association, one facet of an analogy calls forth another until finally the various aspects of the topic under consideration have been dealt with. The author's discourse on the observance of silence (72-81) will serve to illustrate his method. Following the traditional pattern, the author begins with a quotation from the Bible, in this case, a passage from the Book of Solomon:

> "Hwose ne wiðhalt his wordes, seiþ Salomon þe wise, he is ase buruh wiðuten wal, þer ase uerd mei in oueral."
>
> ["He who restrains not his words," saith Solomon the wise, "is like a city without walls, into which an army may enter on all sides."]
>
> (74-75; Proverbs 25.28)

Although the image is transparent enough, the author provides an extended explication in the manner of the homilies. He elaborates on the fate of a "city without walls":

> Þe veond of helle mid his ferd went þurh þe tutel ꝥ is euer open into þe heorte.
>
> [The fiend of hell goes in with his army through the portal, that is ever open, into the heart.]
>
> (74-75)

He follows this analogy with an exemplum from the Lives of the Fathers, a tale in which a group of monks praise one of their brethren who, like themselves, is a man "of muche speche" [of much speech] (74-75). A holy man observing this situation comments wisely:

> Gode . . . beo boð; auh hore wunnunge naueð no ȝet. Hore muð maðeleð euer; 7 hwose euer wule mei gon in 7 leden uorð hore asse; ꝥ is, hore unwise soule.
>
> ["Good . . . they both are, but their dwelling hath no gate; their mouth is always prating; and whoever will may go in and lead forth their ass;" that is, their unwise soul.]
>
> (74-75)

For the concluding moral, a traditional element of the exemplum, the

author quotes St. James:

> 3if eni weneð ƿ he beo religius, ⁊ bridleð nout his tunge, his religiun is fals; he gileð his heorte.
>
> ["If any man thinketh that he is religious, and bridleth not his tongue, his religion is false; he deceiveth his heart."]
>
> (74-75; James 1.26)

Immediately he fastens upon the figure conjured up by the word "bridleth," using this facet of James' text to introduce a new analogy. He observes that a

> bridel nis nout one iðe horses muðe; auh sit sum up o þen eien, ⁊ sum oðen eoren. Vor alle preo muche neod ƿ heo beon ibridled; auh iðe muðe sit tet iren, ⁊ oðe lihte tunge; vor per is mest neod hold hwon þe tunge is o rune, ⁊ ivollen on to eornen.
>
> [bridle is not only in the mouth of the horse, but part of it is upon his eyes, and part of it on his ears: for it is very necessary that all the three should be bridled. But the iron is put in the mouth and on the light tongue; for there is most need to hold when the tongue is in talk, and has begun to run.]
>
> (74-75)

From this elaboration the author draws the image back to its practical application in the lives of the anchoresses, pointing out the tropological significance of the tongue when it "has begun to run":

> Vor ofte we penchеð, hwon we uoð on to spekene, uorte speken lutel, ⁊ wel isete wordes; auh þe tunge is sliddri, uor heo wadeð ine wete, ⁊ slit lichtliche uorð from lut word into monie.
>
> [For we often intend, when we begin to speak, to speak little, and well placed words; but the tongue is slippery for it wadeth in the wet, and slides easily on from few to many words.]
>
> (74-75)

Such explication is highly typical of the Riwle's author. Because the Ancren Riwle is a treatise of personalized instruction concerned fundamentally with the morality of the individual soul, its imagery is often intended to be interpreted only on a tropological level. After

the explication, the author chooses a related passage in Solomon to continue his discourse: "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin."[24] Commenting on Solomon's text, still with the overtones of the slippery tongue in the previous image, the author points out that much talking cannot be without sin, for

> urom soð hit slit te uals: vt of god into vuel, ⁊ from mesure into unimete: ⁊ of a drope waxeð a muche flod, ⁊ adrencheð þe soule.
>
> [from truth it slides into falsehood, out of good into evil, and from moderation into excess; and from a drop waxeth a great flood, that drowns the soul.]
>
> (74-77)

This commentary in turn leads him to appropriate words from the dialogue of St. Gregory--and so the discourse continues. In this manner the author of the Riwle carries forward his instruction, leading from one image or exemplum to another, until he has explained adequately his topic of instruction.

This example of moral instruction from the Ancren Riwle shows that in allegorical imagery of the homiletic type, the interpretation is almost always drawn from an arbitrary analogy on the part of the author. While many of the abstractions are presented in fairly self-explanatory shapes, not all the projections, by virtue of the projected form alone, make the analogy obvious. The comparisons are chosen for the purpose of pointing out a certain moral, and only the explication, developed in detail, interprets the allegorical meaning that is intended. By arbitrary designation, for example, sickness

---

[24] Proverbs 10.19, The Holy Bible, Douay version, trans. from the Latin Vulgate A. D. 1609 (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1950). All biblical passages not taken directly from Morton are from this edition.

can be like "soule leche, ⁊ salue of hire wunden, ⁊ scheld, þet heo ne kecche∂ mo" [the physician of the soul, and heal its wounds, and protect it from receiving more] (182-83). The same discourse later describes sickness as "þe goldsmi∂ þet i∂e blisse of heouene ouergulde∂ þine crune" [the goldsmith who, in the blessedness of heaven, gildeth thy crown] (182-83). In his commentary on human relationships the author tells his anchoresses that "hwose euer herme∂ þe, o∂er eni wo de∂ þe, scheome, grome, o∂er teone--þench þet he is Godes ȝerd" [whosoever harmeth thee, or inflicteth upon thee any wrong, shame, anger, or suffering--reflect, that he is God's rod] (184-85); in the same commentary he assures the sisters: "Euerich worlich wo is Godes sonde" [Every worldly affliction is God's ambassador] (190-91). Only through the explanation or the setting which the author gives can an appropriate moral be drawn from an analogy. The figures successively presented and explicated in this manner constitute a simple, straightforward imagery. As R. W. Frank observes, " . . . the medieval allegorist was not intent on baffling his reader. His purpose was to communicate."[25]

Though the homiletic literature has come down to us in written form, its graphic and colourful imagery is presented in the manner of a preacher unfolding his material. The homilies were designed essentially to be delivered as sermons, often in a series, so

---

[25] Robert Worth Frank, Jr., "The Art of Reading Medieval Personification-Allegory," English Literary History, 20 (1953), p. 240.

that behind the written material one detects the oral tradition with its gestures and vivid word pictures carefully chosen to attract or repulse. The vivid realism of this imagery invited a similar depth of expression in art. A variety of figures used recurrently in the instructional writings quite naturally brought about the development of standard iconographies for the various abstractions. Among the visions of Hermas the Shepherd, for example, there is an account of the seven virtues (Faith, Continence, Simplicity, Knowledge, Innocence, Reverence and Love) symbolized by seven women--a conception that played a great role in the development of Christian art.[26] As early as the third century a religious iconography of Christian symbols and legends had already been established.[27] Through the narrative and realistic qualities of Christian art, the paintings, sculptures and stained glass windows became in themselves allegories of the Christian beliefs. Commenting on the value of such art, Basil the Great declared: "What words tell the ear, mute paintings show by imitation."[28] These sentiments are expressed again two centuries

---

[26] Johannes Quasten, Patrology: The Beginnings of Patristic Literature (Utrecht-Antwerp: Spectrum Publishers, 1966 [1950]), I, 103. Hermas (first, or early second century) was a layman, the author of a book called "The Shepherd." Part of the book consists of five visions, the fifth of which introduces an "Angel of repentance" in the guise of a shepherd. In the vision, the shepherd delivers a precept on the seven virtues given above. See "Hermas," Catholic Encyclopedia, VII, 268 ff.

[27] Art and Mankind: Larousse Encyclopedia of Byzantine and Medieval Art, gen. ed. Rene' Huyghe (New York: Prometheus Press, 1968 [1963]), p. 38.

[28] Quoted in Art and Mankind, pp. 20-21.

later by Pope Gregory the Great: "Paintings figure in churches in order that the illiterate looking at the walls, may read what they are unable to read in books."[29] Just as homilies were a popular moral literature during the Middle Ages, so too, this type of interpretive iconography was a pronounced influence in Christian instruction at that time. Writing on the origins and development of Gothic Art, Marcel Aubert comments:

> The high bays which let in a flood of light, "a light of divine essence" as Suger called it, also satisfied medieval man's love for stained glass windows, in which he could see the great themes of the Old and New Testaments, and the legends of the saints, all bathed in the azure blue of the skies. These were the subjects he had admired formerly on the walls of the Romanesque Churches. Medieval man's intense love for colour combined with his love of stories and legends, and together these augmented the efforts of the clergy to teach him through images.[30]

This aspect of the homiletic tradition contributed greatly towards reaching the emotions, for the repulsion of sin or the attraction of virtue was readily portrayed in appropriate figures. In some instances the art pieces were exceedingly moving. The tenderness of the devotion to the crucified Christ, for example, was probably promoted to a great extent by the devotional art of the Medieval period. The crucifixion scenes which were added to the liturgical cycle of the tenth and eleventh centuries were

> charged with deep tenderness and poignant emotion. In the Descent from the Cross, the Virgin caresses Christ's cheek with her own, and St. John kisses the lifeless hand of his Master.[31]

---

[29] Art and Mankind, p. 21.

[30] Art and Mankind, pp. 336-37.

[31] Art and Mankind, p. 147.

Portrayals of this nature, whether in word or on canvas, did not fail to evoke the pathos of the medieval Christian, as is evidenced by the fund of prayers addressed to the Passion of Christ in this period. The author of the Riwle uses several of these traditional prayers, prayers in which the conventional imagery is predominant. During the veneration of the crucifix at Mass, for example, the anchoresses are invited to pray as follows:

> Salue crux sancta, arbor digna, cujus robur preciosum mundi tulit talentum. Salue crux que in corpore Christi dedicata es, et ex membris ejus tanquam margaritis ornata. O crux, lignum triumphale mundi: uera salus uale, inter ligna nullum tale, fronde, flore, germine. Medecina Christiana salua sanos, egros sana.
>
> [Hail, O holy Cross, worthy tree, whose precious wood bore the treasure of the world! Hail, O Cross, who in the body of Christ was dedicated, and with his limbs adorned, as with pearls. O Cross, wood triumphant over the world. True safety, hail! Among woods none such, for leaf, flower, bud. O Christian medicine, heal, heal the sound and sick.]
>
> (18-19)

Many are conceived with great emotion and intensity of feeling, as the following instruction from the Riwle shows:

> Nem ofte Jesu, ⁊ cleope his passiun to helpe, ⁊ halse him bi his pinen, ⁊ bi his deorewurðe blode, ⁊ bi his deaðe o rode. Vlih into his wunden: creop in ham mid pine pouhte. Pet beoð al opene. Muchel luuede he us pet lette makien swuche purles in him uorte huden us inne. And mid his deorewurðe blode biblodege pine heorte.
>
> [Name Jesus often, and invoke the aid of his passion, and implore him by his sufferings, and by his precious blood, and by his death on the cross. Fly into his wounds; creep into them with thy thought. They are all open. He loved us much who permitted such cavities to be made in him, that we might hide ourselves in them. And, with his precious blood, ensanguine thine heart.]
>
> (292-93)

Whether in art or in literature, imagery such as this appeals strongly to the senses, and through the senses to the emotions. The heritage

of Christian art, itself derived from Christian writings, greatly fortifies the persuasive dimension of the homiletic tradition.

While the written tradition involves mainly religious works such as biblical commentaries and doctrinal instructions, the absorption of secular literature is also evident. The use of the natural philosophies in early religious writings is pointed out in the Oxford Guide:

> Such of [the symbols] as represent animals, either real or fabulous, had probably long been known to popular tradition in the East, where the attribution of moral and mystical qualities to beasts was very general. Not long after the beginning of our era, and probably at Alexandria, these traditions were embodied in a work called the Physiologus or book of Natural History from which similar books called Bestiaries, so popular in the Middle Ages, were in later time derived.[32]

In its extensive animal imagery, the Ancren Riwle indicates the influences of these Bestiaries as well as of the Aesopian tradition. The influence of these works is probably second-hand, however, since the animal imagery drawn from them was likely incorporated in the earlier homiletic writings which are the author's direct source. Imagery derived from the classical writers is also obtained in this indirect manner, the Hellenistic tradition of literature having been absorbed by the early Christian writers. Though the author mentions Ovid and Seneca specifically, their works are not a major influence in the Riwle.[33]

---

[32] A Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities, p. 78.

[33] Ovid is referred to on page 226, Seneca, on page 72. These are only passing references, however, and are by no means an important source of the author's imagery.

The borrowings from books similar to the Ancren Riwle affect its colorful imagery very little; as Macaulay observes:

> In declining the suggestion that the Ancren Riwle was originally written in Latin, we must not, of course, fail to note its obligations to earlier Latin books dealing with the same subjects, as for example the Exhortatio ad Virginem deo dedicatam by S. Caesarius, and especially Aelred's "Epistola ad sororem inclusam,". . . from which several particular precepts seem to be derived, as the warnings against the possession of cattle, against large hospitality and almsgiving and against keeping a school, the suggestion of caution in choosing an elderly and thoroughly trustworthy confessor, and some of the precepts about dress and adornment.[34]

Shepherd pinpoints the influence of Ailred's work as follows:

> It looks as if Ailred's work provided [the Riwle's author] with the frame, not the structure of the Rule as a treatise, but of the concept of the anchorite life which he had in mind.[35]

The fact remains, then, that the allegorical imagery of the Ancren Riwle has been chosen mainly from well-known homiletic materials, and has been presented in the conventions of that tradition.

---

[34] G. C. Macaulay, "The Ancren Riwle," MLR, 9 (1914), 78. Footnote 1.

[35] Shepherd, Ancrene Wisse, p. xxxvii. A list of similarities by J. Hall in Early Middle English, 1130-1250 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), Part 2, Notes, pp. 388-407, bears out Shepherd's comments. Hope Emily Allen in "The Author of the Ancren Riwle," PMLA, 44 (1929), 635-680, makes a comparison of the Riwle with Aelred's letter to show that the similarities are not in the imagery (pp. 653-660). In a later article, "Further Borrowings from the Ancren Riwle," MLR, 24 (1929), 1-15, Miss Allen indicates that the Ancren Riwle has a character of its own, apart from Aelred's letter.

Though the author reverts repeatedly to familiar allegorical expression in his instructions, he selects or transforms his materials to apply to situations of the contemporary world. These contemporary images are particularly interesting in that they portray the actual life and times of the author and his three anchoresses. At the outset of the treatise, for example, a courtly lady and her handmaid signify the relationship between the interior and exterior rule. The first rule, dealing with the right conduct of the heart, "is ase lefdi" [is as a lady] (4-5), and the second, which pertains to the regulation of the outward life, is "ase puften" [as her handmaid] (4-5). The author hastens to explicate: "vor al þet me eauer deð of þe oðer wiðuten, nis bute vorto riwlen þe heorte wiðinnen" [for, whatever men do of the other outwardly, is only to direct the heart within] (4-5). The lady-handmaid figure is used again in summing up the author's general comments on the nature of the anchorite life:

> [A]l þet gode religiuse doð oðer weneð efter þe uttre riwle, al togedere is hereuore; al nis bute ase a sedole to timbrin her toward: al nis bute ase a schelchine to seruien þe leafdi to riwlen ðe heorte.
>
> [All that a good recluse does or thinks, according to the external rule, is altogether for this end; it is only as an instrument to promote this true religion; it is only a slave to help the lady to rule the heart.]
>
> (12-13)

Although chivalry is often central to the analogy, many images reflect the life of the common people as well. The instructions on silence, for example, illustrate this. Isaias's metaphor, "The tillage of the righteousness is silence" (32.17), is extended by the author of the Riwle to relate directly to the daily task of the English yeoman: "Silence tileð hire; ⁊ heo itiled bringeð forð soule

eche uode" [Silence tilleth her, and she being tilled bringeth forth eternal food for the soul] (78-79). In this instruction on silence, also, the author gives a homely portraiture comparing conversation to the grinding process. As people during holy conversation are said to grind wheat, so, he points out, "Heo grint greot þe cheofled" [She grinds grit who prates idly] (70-71). The metaphor is extended, making the grinding instruments analogous to parts of the idle talker's head: "Þe two cheoken beoð þe two grindstones. Þe tunge is þe cleppe" [The two cheeks are the two grindstones; the tongue is the clapper] (70-71). The author concludes his analogy with the admonition that his dear sisters never grind such nonsense:

> Loked, leoue sustren, ⁊ ouwer cheoken ne grinden neuer bute soule uode; ne our earen ne hercnen neuer bute soule heale: ⁊ nout one our earen, auh ower eie purles tuneð aȝein idel speche: ⁊ tó ou ne cume no tale, ne tiðinge of þe worlde.
>
> [Look, dear sisters, that your cheeks never grind any thing but soul food, nor your ears hear any thing but soul heal; and shut not only your ears but your eye windows against idle conversation; that neither talk nor tidings of this world may come to you.]
>
> (70-71)

The author's observation of life in localized circumstances and conditions contributes a certain realism to his teaching, keeping them on a practical level. When he advocates silence concerning good deeds, for example, he spontaneously draws upon a situation of everyday life. By analogy he tells the anchoresses to leave unproclaimed the good works that they do in order not to risk losing the merit for them:

> Þe hen hwon heo haueð ileid, ne con buten kakelen. And hwat biȝit heo perof? Kumeð þe coue anonriht ⁊ reueð hire hire eiren, ⁊ fret al ⁊ of hwat heo schulde uorð bringen hire cwike briddes.

[When the hen has laid, she must needs cackle. And what does she get by it? Straightway comes the chough and robs her of her eggs and devours all that of which she should have brought forth her live birds.]

(66-67)

In the characteristic manner of the homilist, the author leaves no room for misinterpretation, but proceeds immediately to an explication:

> ȝ riht also þe luðere cǫue deouel berð awei uorm þe kakelinde ancren, ȝ uorswoluweð al þ god þ heo istreoned habbeð, þ schulden ase briddes beren ham up touward heouene, ȝif hit nere icakeled.

[And just so the wicked chough, the devil, beareth away from the cackling anchoresses, and swalloweth up, all the good they have brought forth, and which ought, as birds, to bear them up toward heaven, if it had not been cackled.]

(66-67)

Succinctly he emphasizes his point once more, using a graphic, contemporary image:

> Þe wreche peoddare more noise he makeð to ȝeien his sope, þen a riche mercer al his deorewurðe ware.

[The poor pedlar makes more noise to cry his soap than a rich mercer all his valuable wares.]

(66-67)

Occasionally the imagery employs the most obvious elements of the environment. In advocating patience in the face of evil reports, the author equates words with a puff of wind, arguing that a puff of wind should not upset the anchoress:

> [H]wat is word bute wind? To woc heo is istrencðed þet a windes puf of a word mei auellen, ȝ aworpen into sunne? ȝ hwo nule punchen þeonne wunder of an ancre þet a windes puf of a word auelleð? Let, an oðer half, ne scheaweð heo þ heo is dust, ȝ vnstable þinc, þet mid a lutel wind of a word is anon to blowen, ȝ to bollen. Þe ilke puf of his muð, ȝif þu hit wurpe under þine vet, hit schulde beren þe upward toward þe blisse of heouene.

[What is a word but wind? Too feebly is she strengthened whom a wind's puff of a word may cast down and throw into sin; and who, then, would not think it strange of an anchoress whom a wind's puff of a word casteth down? And again, doth she not

shew that she is dust, and an unstable thing, who, with a little wind of a word, is immediately blown up and provoked. The same puff of his mouth, if thou cast it under thy feet, would bear thee upward toward the blessedness of heaven.]
(122-23).

In imagery drawn from the contemporary scene, the author's language is often colloquial. Sometimes he uses a familiar epigrammatic statement or a proverbial phrase. Cautioning the young religious about following the foolish example of the old, for example, he says: "O leoue ȝunge ancren, ofte a ful hawur smiþ smeoþiþ a ful woc knif" [O dear young recluse, often does a right skilful smith forge a full weak knife] (52-53). With regard to moderation rather than severe justice he says: "Betere is liste þen luþer strencðe" [Skilful prudence is better than rude force] (268-69). Even these short, simple metaphors, however, are often given the appropriate explication, as is shown after his comment on light and secret temptations:

Lutle dropen purleð þene ulint þet ofte ualleð peron: ⁊ lihte derne uondunges þet me nis nout iwar of, ualleð oberhwule one treowe heorte.

[Small drops wear through the flint upon which they often fall; and light secret temptations which men are not aware of, at times cause a faithful heart to err.]
(220-21)

In this manner the author reinforces his moral instructions with well-expressed examples from life itself. These graphic comparisons and popular proverbs, given in familiar discourse, would be intelligible even to those less educated than the gentle sisters to whom they are addressed.

The allegorical imagery of the Ancren Riwle is drawn, then, from oral, written, artistic and contemporary aspects of the homiletic tradition. It is from the conventions of this tradition that the figures ultimately take their meaning and their persuasive force.

The imagery is not only the heritage of a literary tradition, however, but also the product of an entire mentality. The images of the Riwle reflect the deep religious tendencies of the age, for the piety and asceticism which they promote illustrate the fervour with which medieval man sought to save his soul. To comprehend the effectiveness of the images as a teaching device requires more than a comprehension of their underlying allegory; it requires also a feeling for the religious spirit of the time.

Besides revealing aspects of medieval life, the images provide insight into patterns of medieval thought. They show us medieval man's view of human life and his opinion of body and soul; they give his outlook on virginity and his ideas on the nature of temptation and sin. It is from the point of view of these patterns of thought, along with inherited homiletic interpretations, that the allegorical imagery of the Ancren Riwle will be considered and discussed.

CHAPTER II

IMAGERY OF THE ANCHORITE LIFE

Since the Ancren Riwle is basically a guide to the anchorite vocation, much of its imagery is specifically oriented towards this way of life. To describe the anchorite life, the author draws upon imagery from a variety of categories. He points out, for example, that the holiness of life which this vocation implies is intended to be a support to lay Christians. This specific purpose within the Christian community is conveyed through the familiar image in which the Church is compared to a ship; in this structure, the anchoress serves as an anchor:[1]

> 7 for þi is ancre icleoped ancre, 7 under chirche iancred, ase ancre under schipes borde, uorte holden þet schip, þet uðen ne stormes hit ne ouerworpen. Al so al holi chirche, þet is schip icleoped, schal ancren oðer ancre þet hit so holde, þet tes deofles puffes, þet beoð temptaciuns, hit ne ouerworpe.
>
> [And an anchoress is for this reason called anchoress, and anchored under the church as an anchor under a ship, to hold the ship so that neither waves nor storms may overwhelm it. In like manner shall anchoresses, or the anchor, hold the Holy Church Universal, which is called a ship, so firm, that the devil's storms, which are temptations, may not overwhelm it.]
>
> (142-43)

---

[1] Actually, a mistake in etymology on the author's part, as M. B. Salu points out in The Ancrene Riwle (trans. M. B. Salu, Notre Dame, Ind.: The University Press, 1955): "The etymology is mistaken. The O. E. word for anchor was ancer, while the word for hermit was ancer, the first element indicating solitude" (Footnote, p. 63).

The anchor is among the oldest Christian symbols, appearing in catacomb carvings and other early Christian art. It symbolizes hope, and sometimes rests upon a fish, to indicate that the Christian's hope is based on Christ.[2] Its qualities of firmness and stability, which form the basis of the analogy in the Ancren Riwle, were used by the patristic writers as well. Among the writings of Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403), for example, is Anchoratus, a comprehensive work devoted to the refutation of heresy. The title means "the firmly-anchored man," and provides its readers with "the anchor of faith to secure them amidst the storms of heresy."[3] To become a symbol of faith, then, is an important function of the anchorite life, as the author tells his anchoresses: "Euerich haueð þis auoreward" [Every recluse is bound to this by covenant] (142-43).

The author's description of the eremitic life is made graphic by negative as well as by positive images, as his comparison of the testy anchoress's behaviour with certain habits of the pelican illustrates. What is remarkable about his use of this well-known image is the interesting way in which he adapts it to his purpose of the moment. The traditional image stems from the medieval belief that the pelican, in anger at the importunings of its young, first slays the

---

[2] A Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities, pp. 76-77.

[3] Quasten, III, 386.

young birds, then in remorse revives them with its own life-blood. According to the account in one Bestiary, the phenomenon occurs as follows:

> The pelican is excessively devoted to its children. But when these have been born and begin to grow up, they flap their parents in the face with their wings, and the parents, striking back, kill them. Three days afterward the mother pierces her breast, opens her side, and lays herself across her young, pouring out her blood over the dead bodies. This brings them to life again.[4]

From this account of its self-sacrificing and life-giving properties, the pelican is usually taken to be a symbol of the redeeming Christ. In Christian art, the pelican symbolizes atonement and crucifixion. When used as an emblem of Christ, a pelican is "vulning" herself.[5] In the iconographic tradition, a pelican is found nesting on top of the cross.[6]

As in the legendary situation of the Bestiary, the author of the Riwle first draws attention to the peculiar habits of the pelican:

> Pellican is a leane fowel, so weamod ⁊ so wreðful þet hit sleað ofte uor grome his owune briddes, hwon heo teoneð him, ant þeonne sone þer efter hit bicumeð swuðe sori, ⁊ makeð swuðe muche mone, ⁊ smit him suluen mid

---

[4] J. H. White, The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts being a translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960 [1954]), p. 132. See also Jobes, p. 1250; G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 202.

[5] Jobes, p. 1250.

[6] George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 23.

his bile ꝧ hit slouh er his briddes mide, ⁊ drauhð vt blod of his breoste, ⁊ mit tet blod acwikeð eft his isleiene briddes.

[The pelican is a lean bird, so peevish and so wrathful that often, in her anger, she killeth her own young ones when they molest her, and then, soon after she is very sorry, and maketh great moan, and smiteth herself with her bill wherewith she slew her young, and draweth blood out of her breast, and with the blood she then quickeneth her slain birds.]

(118-19)

Unlike the traditional *significatio* of the *Bestiary*, however, the exposition in the *Riwle* makes the allegory pertain to the peevish anchoress rather than to Christ. With an individuality characteristic of the author, his analogy is given as follows:

Þis pellican is þe weamode ancre. Hire briddes, þet beoð hire gode werkes, þet hēo sleað ofte mid bile of schearpe wreððe: auh hwon heo so haueð idon, do ase deð þe pellican: of punche hit swuðe sone, ⁊ mid hire owune bile bekie hire breoste: þet is, mid schrifte of hire muðe þet heo sunegede mide, ⁊ slouh hire gode werkes, drawe þe blode of sunne ut of hire breoste, þet is, of þe heorte, þet soule lif is inne, ⁊ so schulen eft acwikien hire isleiene briddes, þet beoð hire werkes.

[This pelican is the peevish recluse. Her birds are her good works, which she often slayeth with the bill of sharp wrath; and when she hath so done, she, as the pelican doth, quickly repents, and with her own bill pecks her breast; that is, with confession of her mouth wherewith she sinned and slew her good works, draweth the blood of sin out of her breast, that is, of the heart in which is the life of the soul, and thus shall then quicken her slain birds, which are her works.]

(118-19)

In this explication an entirely new interpretation is given to a symbol of long-standing tradition. Extension of the image illustrates further its imaginative use by the author in describing the anchorite life. In a subsequent passage, the pelican as a "leane fowel" [lean bird] lends force to his recommendation that the anchoresses observe strict laws of fasting:

> Eft . . . þe pellican is a fuel þet haueð anoðer cunde: þet is, þet hit is euer leane. Vor þi ase ich er seide, Dauid efnede him þerto in ancre persone, ⁊ ine ancre stefne. . . . "Ich am a pellican iliche þet wuneð bi him one:" ⁊ ancre ouh þus to siggen, ⁊ beon iliche þe pellican anont þet hit is leane.
>
> [Again, the pelican is a bird that hath another nature; which is, that she is always lean. Wherefore, as I said before, David compared himself to her in the character and in the voice of a recluse: . . . "I am like a pelican that dwelleth alone:" and a recluse ought thus to say, and to be like the pelican as to her being lean.]
>
> (126-27)

Like David in his leanness, the anchoress ought to lead a life of austerity, not a life "ase swin ipund ine sti uorte uetten, ⁊ forte greaten aȝein þe cul of þer eax" [like a swine pent up in a sty to fatten and to increase in size for the stroke of the axe] (127-28). This quality of leanness in the pelican is used again to convey the lofty nature of the eremitic life. Beginning with the Biblical text, "Foxes have their holes, and birds of heaven their nests" (Matthew 8.20; Luke 13.32) the author compares the false anchoress to a groveling fox, while the good anchoress is shown to have the nature of the birds:

> Heo is of þe briddes þet ure Louerd speked of, efter þe uoxes: þe mid hore lustes ne holieð nout aduneward, ase doð þe uoxes, þet beoð false ancren: auh habbeð up an heih, ase briddes of heouene, iset hore nest, þet is hore reste. Treowe ancren beoð briddes bitocnod: vor heo leaueð þe earðe, þet is, þe luue of alle eorðliche þinges, ⁊ þuruh ȝirnunge of heorte to heouenliche þinges, vleoð upward, touward heouene. Ant tauh heo vleon heie, mid heih lif ⁊ holi, heo holdeð þauh þet heaued lowe þuruh milde ȣdmodnesse, ase brid vleoinde buhð þet heaued lowe, ant leteð al nouht wurð þet heo wel doð, ⁊ wel wurcheð: . . . Fleoð heie, ⁊ holdeð þauh þet heaued euer lowe. Þe hwingen þet bereð ham upward, þet beoð gode þeauwes þet heo moten sturien into gode werkes, ase brid hwon hit wule vleon stureð his hwingen. Auh þe treowe ancren þet we efneð to briddes . . . . Heo spredeð hore hwingen, ant makieð a creoiz of ham suluen, ase brid deð hwon hit flihð, þet is, ine þouhte of heorte, ⁊ ine bitternesse of flesche, bereð Godes rode.

> [She is of the nature of the birds, of which our Lord speaketh after the foxes, which dig not downward with their lusts, as do the foxes, which are false anchoresses, but, as birds of heaven which have set up on high their nest; that is, their rest. True anchoresses are compared to birds; for they leave the earth; that is, the love of all earthly things; and, through yearning of heart after heavenly things, fly upward toward heaven. And, although they fly high, with high and holy life, yet they hold the head low, through meek humility, as a bird flying boweth down its head, and accounteth all her good deeds and good works nothing worth . . . . Fly high, and yet hold the head always low. The wings that bear them upwards are, good principles, which they must move unto good works, as a bird, when it would fly, moveth its wings. Also, the true anchoresses, whom we compare to birds . . . spread their wings and make a cross of themselves, as a bird doth when it flieth; that is, in the thoughts of the heart, and the mortification of the flesh, they bear the Lord's cross.] (130-33)

This representation of the soul by a bird goes back to the beginnings of Christian art, as Ferguson points out:

> In the earliest days of Christian art, birds were used as symbols of the "winged soul." Long before any attempt was made by the artist to identify birds according to species, the bird form was employed to suggest the spiritual, as opposed to the material.[7]

The allegory in the Riwle mentions the "leane" pelican specifically because of its ability to fly high. Unlike the "steorc" [stork] whose flesh and feet (the pleasures and lusts, respectively, of the carnal anchoress) keep it from flying, the meagre pelican is able to soar on high (132-33).[8] In the analogy, the happiness of the faithful anchoress is like that of the birds of heaven. Through her prayers and meditations she is able to reach the heights of heaven,

---

[7] Ferguson, p. 6.

[8] Jobes points out that by Chaucer's time, the stork had become a symbol of adultery (p. 1497).

but like the birds who must alight for purposes of food and rest, the anchoress, too, must be concerned with her physical needs. Short, picturesque images of this type add not only vividness to the author's portrayal of the eremitic life, but also interest and attraction.

The Riwle's most important allegory of the anchorite life, however, is the marriage relationship in which the anchoress is presented as the bride and spouse of Jesus Christ. This image is inherent in the conception of the entire treatise,[9] forming thereby a strong connection between the Ancren Riwle and homiletic convention. Before its use in the Ancren Riwle, the symbolism of the spiritual marriage had been conditioned by a long tradition of scriptural and other commentary. Its bridal imagery is biblical in origin, appearing in both the Old and the New Testament. In Osee, the "bride" refers to a nation. Israel, having sinned, is portrayed in the guise of the faithless wife whom Jahweh wishes to draw back to himself:

> Therefore, behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart. And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that she shall call me: My husband. . . . . And I will espouse thee to me for ever: and I will espouse thee to me in justice, and judgement, and in mercy, and in commiserations. And I will espouse thee to me in faith: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.
> (Osee 2.14, 16, 19-20)

In the New Testament, St. Paul uses the metaphor as an image of the Church. Writing to the congregation at Corinth, Paul says: "For I am jealous for you with a divine jealousy. For I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ

---

[9] The marriage image is alluded to or elaborated upon specifically on pages 2, 10, 60, 90, 98, 100 ff., 108, 116, 120, 122, 290, 298, 330, 340, 370, 376, 388, 392-96, 402.

(2 Cor. 11.2).

The early patristic works incorporate the image of the spiritual marriage as well. Among the revelations of Hermas the Shepherd, for example, there is one in which the Church appears to him "first as an old and venerable matron, who gradually casts off the signs of age and emerges in the fourth vision as a bride, symbol of God's elect."[10] But the spiritual marriage becomes a popular allegory in the exegetical and homiletic writings mainly because of its prevalence in the Canticle of Canticles.[11] Interpretations of this work appear again and again in patristic tradition, identffying the bride alternately with the Church and the human soul. In Origen's homilies on the Canticle, for example, the Church is predominantly regarded as the bride, while in one of his commentaries ft is the individual soul that is regarded as the spouse of Christ.[12] This alternating interpretation of Canticles is used also by the early medieval homilists such as Bede and Aelfric.[13]

---

[10] Quasten, I, 93. See Footnote 26, p. 18 above.

[11] See Cuthbert Butler, Western Mysticism (New York: Dutton & Co., 1923), pp. 160 ff. Butler briefly traces the origin and evolution of the "spiritual marriage" metaphor.

[12] Quasten, II, 46-50; 99-100.

[13] A variety of other interpretations was made in the later Middle Ages. Gertrud Schiller in Iconography of Christian Art (trans. Janet Seligman, Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971 [1966]) comments: "As the Middle Ages progressed, interest in the person of Mary continued to grow and in the interpretation of prefigurations and symbols of the Incarnation of Christ the emphasis shifted accordingly towards Mary. The same applies to the expositions of the Song of Solomon. Mary replaces the bride, and the

Besides being an allegorical image of the Church and the soul, however, the spiritual marriage was used by the early Christian writers as a figure for the religious life. In his own treatise on virginity, St. Jerome testifies that Athanasius dealt with the subject in a small manual written "for the Christian virgin, giving her detailed instruction about the conduct and religious duties of a bride of Christ, and supplying her with beautiful prayers."[14] There is extant a further discourse on virginity, also ascribed to Athanasius, which addresses not one particular virgin only, but all who are willing to live in the state of virginity. Athanasius "regards them as brides of Christ who have signed a contract with Christ which will last to their death."[15] In his treatise entitled The Dress of Virgins (c.249), Cyprian concerns himself with the dangers which beset those that have dedicated their virginity to Christ, advocating that the "brides of Christ" dress plainly and avoid jewelry and cosmetics.[16]

---

images used in this eastern poem for the bride or mistress were seen as symbols of Mary" (I, 53). Schiller goes on to give the signification of the Canticle from this point of view. This interpretation did not become prominent until after the time of the Ancren Riwle, however.

[14] Quasten, III, 45. Athanasius (295-373) is celebrated for his defence of Catholic belief regarding the Incarnation against the Arians at the Council of Nicea in 325.

[15] Quasten, III, 46.

[16] Quasten, II, 347. Cyprian (c.200-258) was Bishop of Carthage between c.249-258. He was the first great Latin writer among the Christians.

To this heritage of interpretations, one further conditioning factor must be mentioned in order to comprehend more fully the implications of the marriage allegory in the Ancren Riwle. That factor is the influence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, whose writings greatly popularized the image of the spiritual marriage. Regarding Bernard's mysticism, Dean Inge comments:

> The great importance of Bernard in the history of mysticism does not lie in the speculative side of his teaching, in which he depends almost entirely upon Augustine. His great achievement was to recall devout and loving contemplation to the image of the crucified Christ, and to found that worship of our Saviour as the "Bridegroom of the Soul," which in the next centuries inspired so much fervid devotion and lyrical sacred poetry. The romantic side of Mysticism, for good and for evil, received its greatest stimulus in Bernard's Poems and in his Sermons on the Canticles.[17]

Bernard was one of the dominant figures among theological writers of the early twelfth century who dealt with "an abundance of theological speculation on love."[18] In his celebrated sermons on the Canticle of Canticles, he attempts to express the relationship of love between the soul and God. Sermon LXXXII, for example, shows the affinity that exists between the soul and the Word:

---

[17] Inge, Christian Mysticism, Footnote 2, p. 140. Butler is in accord with this opinion; in discussing the influence of Bernard's writings, Butler cites several modern theologians who maintain that "in the sphere of personal devotional life it was St. Bernard who principally shaped the Catholic piety of the later Middle Ages and also of modern times" (Western Mysticism, p. 138). Butler points out, as well, that "the principal source of St. Bernard's mystical theology is the series of eighty-six sermons on the Canticle of Solomon--the 'Song of Songs', like St. Gregory's Morals, preached as conferences to his monks" (p. 139).

[18] Etienne Gilson, The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955 [1940]), p. 2.

> Every soul . . . may still find in itself not only reason for breathing freely in the hope of pardon, in the hope of mercy, but even for daring to aspire to the nuptial with the Word, not fearing to enter into bonds of alliance with God and to bear the sweet yoke of love with Him who is the King of angels.[19]

Gilson explains that "pure love as conceived by St. Bernard, is essentially a mystical experience,[20] and to describe this mystical experience, Bernard chose the familiar marriage image of the earlier exegetes.[21] He warns, however, against involvement with eroticism:

> Take heed that you bring chaste ears to this discourse of love; and when you think of these two lovers, remember always that not a man and a woman are to be thought of, but the Word of God and a soul. And if I shall speak of Christ and the Church, the sense is the same, except that under the name of the Church is specified not one soul only, but the united souls of many, or rather their unanimity.[22]

---

[19] Quoted in Gilson, p. 134. Butler shows that a "twofold allegorical interpretation of the Bridegroom and Bride of the Canticle runs through Bernard's Sermons: (i) the Bridegroom is Jesus Christ and the Bride is the Church . . . but (ii) when the bride is the soul of the devout individual man, the Bridegroom is not Jesus Christ in His Humanity, but the Divine Word, the Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity" (Western Mysticism, p. 140).

[20] Gilson, p. 143.

[21] W. R. Inge in Studies of the English Mystics (London: John Murray, 1906) points out how difficult it is to convey insights of divine truth: "Language, which was framed to express daily needs and common ideas, breaks down when it is called upon to describe the deeper experiences of the soul. It struggles to find similes for what cannot be said directly. If the poet, and sometimes the artist . . . are driven to use strange symbols to express their ideas personifying the forces of nature and hunting everywhere for metaphors and analogies, even more must this be so with the religious genius" (pp. 18-19).

[22] Quoted in Butler, p. 141. Regarding the charge of impropriety in connection with some of the religious images, Rosemond Tuve (Allegorical Imagery, Princeton: The University Press, 1966) observes: "It simply does not matter where the parallels are fetched from in

While Bernard's doctrine of union with God was intended to apply to every Christian soul, it was adopted in a special manner by the mystics and by those who had renounced physical marriage in order to embrace the religious life. These people found specific application to themselves in St. Bernard's words regarding the soul:

> Rightly then does she renounce all other affections, giving herself up wholly to love and to love alone, since it is to Love Itself that she must render love for love . . . . For she cannot love thus and yet be little loved, since in the mutual consent of two parties consists a full and perfect marriage. . . . But we know well that in loving she is both anticipated and surpassed.[23]

In this and similar pious readings they found an accurate description of their religious state of life. Their personal devotion to Christ involved, on the spiritual level, a relationship so intimate as to be analogous to the married union on the physical level.

This singular image forms the central metaphor of the Ancren Riwle. The author introduces the marriage relationship in the opening sentence of his treatise:

> Louerd! seið Godes Spuse to hire deorewurðe Spus, þeo þe riht luvieð þe, þeo þet beoð riht: þeo þet libbeð efter riwle.
>
> ["The upright love thee, O Lord," saith God's bride to her beloved bridegroom, those who love thee rightly, those are upright; those who live by a rule.]
>
> (3-4; Canticles 1.4)

This implication of the marriage image, where union with God is applied to those who "live by a rule" is insinuated in the author's

---

allegory; what counts is whether a metaphorically understood relation is used to take off into areas where a similitude can point to valuable human action, or to matters of spiritual import" (p. 13).

[23] Quoted in Gilson, pp. 139-40.

recurrent reminder that the anchoress is the bride and spouse of Christ. Such a reminder is given when the author presents the example of the lady in Canticles as a model spouse:

> Loked nu, hu propreliche pe lefdi in Canticis, Godes deorewurde spuse, lered ou, bi hire sawe, hu ȝe schulen siggen . . . "ich ihere nu mi leofmon speken: he cleoped me: ich mot gon."

[Observe, now, how rightly the lady in the Canticles, God's beloved spouse, teacheth you by her words how you shall say . . . "I hear now my beloved speak; he calleth me; I must go."]

(98-99)

He exhorts the sisters to go with the same spirit of readiness when summoned to work or prayer by their "derewurde spuse ⁊ leofman" [dear and beloved spouse] (98-99) who in turn names them "mi leofman, mi kulure, mi schene, mi veire spuse" [my beloved, my dove, my beauteous, my fair spouse] (98-99).

In another context, the author reminds the anchoresses of their initial good will in embracing the religious life:

> Penc ancre pene hwat tu pouhtes ⁊ souhtes po pu uorsoke pene world i pine biclusinge,--biwepen pin owene ⁊ odre monnes sunnen, ⁊ forleosen alle pe blissen of pisse liue uorte bicluppen blisfulliche pine blisfule leofmon ide eche liue of heouene.

[Think, then, O anchoress, of what thou didst intend and seek, when thou didst forsake the world, at thy entrance into the cloister--to weep for thine own and other men's sins, and renounce all the pleasures of this life, in order to embrace, in the fulness of joy, thy blessed Bridegroom in the eternal life of heaven.]

(108-109)

Consequently, they must now endure suffering patiently as Christ, for their sake, suffered silently and without complaint. In this moving appeal for love, the anchoresses are reminded again of their status as bride of Christ:

> Þis is þine leofmones sawe, ȝ tu seli ancre, þet ert his seli spuse, leorne hit ȝeorne of him þet tu hit kunne, ant muwe soðliche siggen.
>
> [This is thy Bridegroom's saying; and do thou, happy anchoress, who art his happy bride, learn it earnestly of him, that thou mayst know it, and be able to say it in truth.]
> (108-109)

The Riwle's exhortations to keep in mind these "facts" of religious life enable us to perceive the exalted view of virginity held by the people of the Middle Ages.

Ultimately, however, the Ancren Riwle was intended as a "riwle" for daily living rather than as a manual of mystic spirituality.[24] Accordingly, the image of the anchoress as bride of Christ manifests itself mainly through practical instructions on exterior behaviour. The anchoress is not an earthly bride, for the author says definitively: "Heo nis nout husewif? auh is a chirche ancre" [She is not a housewife, but a church anchoress] (416-17). The role she plays is much different from that of a temporal spouse, as the author points out in recalling the married woman's duties of entertaining:

---

[24] Dom Gerard Sitwell notes this as a great point of difference between the Ancren Riwle and similar guides written for contemplatives in the fourteenth century, such as The Cloud of Unknowing (author unknown), and Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection, where the attainment of contemplation rather than preliminary purification is the chief aim of the work. Sitwell says: "The pre-occupying interest of the fourteenth-century writers was in contemplation. They recognized, of course, that an ascetic training in the practice of virtue was necessary as a preliminary and indeed a concomitant of this, but it remains true that they made the attainment of contemplation the explicit object of their writing. This was not so in the Ancrene Riwle" (Ancrene Riwle, trans. M. B. Salu, intro. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. ix).

> Summes kurteisie is nobeleas iturnd hire to vuele. Vnder semblaunt of god is ofte iheled sunne. Ancre 7 huses lefdi ouh muche to beon bitweonen.
>
> [The courtesy of some is nevertheless converted into evil to her. Under the semblance of good, sin is often hidden. An anchoress ought to be very different from the mistress of a family.]
>
> (69-71)

But despite the emphasis placed on the difference between a life of virginity and the married state, the analogy involved in the allegory of the spiritual marriage requires by its very nature that the medieval mind have a high opinion of physical marriage. Otherwise, the comparison could not convey the notion of happiness and union intended by the author. The view of married happiness as related in various medieval writings, both religious and secular, is highly controversial.[25] Owst shows that twelfth and thirteenth-century

---

[25] The religious poem Hali Meidenhad is a vicious diatribe against marriage, stressing in exaggerated terms the vexations of this state in order to show virginity in a more desirable light. Thomas de Hales' A Luue-Ron, also written by a cleric at the importunings of a maiden, dwells on the vanity of earthly things rather than the worthiness of the religious life as the Ancren Riwle does. A section from de Hales' poem will illustrate: "Mayde, her þu myht biholde/ Þis worldes luue nys bute o res/ And is by-set so fele-volde/ Vikel and frakel and wok and les./ Peos peines þat her weren bolde/ Beop aglyden so wyndes blea,/ Vunder molde hi leggep colde/ And falewep so dop medewe-gres." [Maiden, here you may behold that this world's love is but a fit of madness, and is beset in so many ways, fickle and deceitful and weak and treacherous. Those thanes that were brave here have passed away just as the wind blows. They lie cold under a mound, and have fallen as doth the meadow grass.]--A Luue-Ron in Early Middle English Texts, ed. Bruce Dickins and R. M. Wilson (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1956 [1951]), ll. 9-16, p. 104. The poem goes on to show the vanity and transitoriness of all earthly things (love, wealth, power) and in the final stanzas urges the lady to choose the finest gematone of all, "Mayden-hod." The fickleness of earthly love and the transitoriness of all earthly things is a theme carried over from Old English literature. In devotional works such as the Ancren Riwle, earthly love is supplanted by the love of Christ and heavenly things. On the other hand, Pearl, which also uses the

homilies as well as literary works often presented derogatory views of married life. After quoting several passages from homilies to illustrate the prevalence of this view, Owst concludes:

> If the preachers' regular view of matrimony was as gross and materialistic as many of their sermons imply, we can hardly be surprised that some men looked upon marriage with the cold, calculating eye of the business man.[26]

This negative view of marriage, though seemingly popular in the early twelfth century, is not evident in the Ancren Riwle. The fact that the author draws a comparison between physical and spiritual marriage indicates his admiration of the husband-wife relationship. In his warning that perhaps only the early years of anchorite life will bring consolations, he illustrates that treatment by God is similar to that of a beloved wife by a loving husband. His image in this instance is one of the more interesting contemporary vignettes of the Riwle:

> Hwonne a mon haueð neoweliche wif iled hom, he nimeð 3eme al softeliche of hire maneres. Pauh he iseo bi hire ei ping pet him mispaie, he let pe 3et iwurðen, ⁊ makeð hire ueire cheres, ⁊ is vmbe eueriches weis pet heo him luuie inwardliche in hire heorte: and hwon he understond wel pet te luue is treouliche iuestned touward him: peonne mei he, sikerliche, chasten hire openliche of hire unðeawes, pet he er uorber ase he ham nout nuste: makeð him swuðe sterne, ⁊ went to pene grimme toð uorte uonden 3ete 3if he muhte hire luue touward him unuesten. A last, hwon he understont pet heo is al wel ituht,--pet for none ping pet he deð hire, heo ne luueð hine neuer pe lesse, auh more ⁊ more, 3if heo mei, urom deie to deie: peonne scheaweð he hire pet he hire luueð sweteliche, ⁊ deð al pet heo wule, ase peo pet he luueð ⁊ iknoweð,--peone is al pet wo iwurðen to wunne. Lif Jesu Crist, ower spus, deð al so bi ou, mine leoue sustren, ne punche ou no wunder.

---

image of the bride of Christ, is written in praise of maidenhood without conjuring up negative views of married life.

[26] Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 382.

> [When a man hath newly brought a wife home, he, with great gentleness, observes her manners. Though he sees in her any thing that he does not approve, yet he taketh no notice of it, and putteth on a cheerful countenance toward her, and carefully uses every means to make her love him affectionately in her heart; and when he is well assured that her love is truly fixed upon him, he may then, with safety, openly correct her faults, which he previously bore with as if he knew them not: he becometh right stern, and assumes a severe countenance, in order still to try whether her love toward him might give way. At last when he perceives that she is completely instructed--that for nothing that he doth to her she loveth him less, but more and more, if possible, from day to day, then he sheweth her that he loveth her sweetly, and doeth whatsoever she desires, as to one whom he loveth and knoweth--then is all that sorrow become joy. If Jesu Christ, your Spouse, doth thus to you, my dear sisters, let it not seem strange to you.]
> (218-19)

Through this homely image the author explains to the sisters that trials will come after a period of sweetness in the religious life.

The marriage image provides the author with an effective means of expression for the devotion to Christ which is required in the life of a recluse. It enables the author to convey a positive view of religious life since it stresses the beauties rather than the difficulties of such a life. Through the marriage analogy the anchorite life with all its austerities and deprivations is portrayed in a desirable fashion, creating assurance that the three young sisters have chosen one of the higher forms of dedication to God.

Since the treatise is a rule of behaviour for the anchoresses, the author necessarily emphasizes their part of the relationship in the spiritual marriage, teaching throughout the conduct befitting such a station. But a prominent final image portrays the unequivocal reciprocation of love, an image which assures the sisters that Christ is also a bridegroom, faithfully wooing the individual soul. The

romantic eloquence of the image portraying Christ as pursuer of the soul in the guise of a chivalrous knight is one of the more elaborate allegorical images of the Riwle:

> A lefdi was pet was mid hire uoan biset al abuten, and hire lond al destrued, ⁊ heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle. On mihti kinges luue was pauh biturnd upon hire, so vnimete swuðe pet he uor wouhlecchunge sende hire his sonden, on efter oðer, and ofte somed monie⁊ ⁊ sende hire beaubelet boðe ueole ⁊ feire, and sukurs of liueneð, ⁊ help of his heie hird to holden hire castel. Heo underueng al ase on unrecheleas þing þet was so herd iheorted pet hire luue ne mihte he neuer beon þe neorre. Hwat wult tu more? He com himsulf a last, and scheawede hire his feire neb, ase þe pet was of alle men ueirest to biholden, and spec swuðe sweteliche ⁊ so murie wordes pet heo muhten þe deade arearen urom deaðe to liue. And wrouhte ueole wundres, and dude ueole meistries biuoren hire eihsihðe⁊ ⁊ scheawede hire his mihten⁊ tolde hire of his kinedome⁊ and bead for to makien hire cwene of al pet he ouhte. Al þis ne help nout. Nes þis wunderlich hoker? Vor heo nes neuer wurðe uorte beon his schelchine. Auh so, þuruh his debonerte', luue hefde ouerkumen hine pet he seide on ende, "Dame, þu ert iweorred, ⁊ þine uon beoð so stronge pet tu ne meiht nonesweis, wiðuten sukurs of mè, etfleon hore honden, pet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle uor þe luue of þe nimen þis fiht upon me, and aredden þe of ham pet schecheð þine deað. Ich wot pauh for soðe pet ich schal bitweonen ham underuongen deaðes wunde⁊ and ich hit wulle heorteliche uorto of-gon þine heorte. Nu, þeonne, biseche ich þe, uor þe luue pet ich kuðe þe, þet tu luuie me, hure ⁊ hure, efter þen ilke dead deaðe, hwon þu noldes liueȝ." Þes king dude al þus: aredde hire of alle hire uon, and was himsulf to wundre ituked, and isleien on ende. Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to liue. Nere þeos ilke lefdi of vuele kunnes kunde, 3if heo ouer alle þing ne luue him her efter?

[There was a lady who was besieged by her foes within an earthen castle, and her lands all destroyed, and herself quite poor. The love of a powerful king was, however, fixed upon her with such boundless affection that to solicit her love he sent his ambassadors, one after another, and often many together, and sent her jewels both many and fair, and supplies of victuals, and the aid of his noble army to keep her castle. She received them all as a careless creature, that was so hard-hearted that he could never get any nearer to her love. What wouldest thou more? He came himself at last and shewed her his fair face, as one who was of all men the most beautiful to behold; and spoke most sweetly, and such pleasant words, that they might have raised the dead from death to

> life. And he wrought many miracles, and did many wondrous works before her eyes, and shewed her his power, and told her of his kingdom, and offered to make her queen of all that belonged to him. All this availed nothing. Was not this disdain a marvellous thing? For she was never worthy to be his scullion. But, through his goodness and gentleness, love so overmastered him that he at last said, "Lady, thou art attacked, and thy enemies are so strong that, without help of me, thou canst not by any means escape their hands, so that they may not put thee to a shameful death. I will, for the love of thee, take upon me this fight, and deliver thee from those who seek thy death, yet I know assuredly that among them I shall receive a mortal wound, and I will gladly receive it to win thy heart. Now then, I beseech thee, for the love that I shew thee, that thou love me, at least after being thus done to death, since thou wouldst not in my life-time." This king did so in every point. He delivered her from all her enemies, and was himself grievously maltreated, and at last slain. But, by a miracle, he arose from death to life. Would not this lady be of a most perverse nature, if she did not love him, after this, above all things?]
>
> (388-91)

The image of Christ as king is not foreign to biblical literature, as the familiar prophecy from Isaias indicates:

> For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace: he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever.[27]

In its imaginative application by the author of the Riwle, however, this traditional image is related to medieval customs. Here the kingship of Christ and its accompanying descriptions are derived from a contemporary feudal scene, and the divine love of God is conceived in a chivalrous spirit. Christ's loving pursuit of the soul is portrayed

---

[27] Isaias 9.6-7. Cf. also Ps. 45 and Ps. 110.1-6, where Christ, as messianic king, is described as a victorious warrior.

in a romantic manner through figures drawn from the contemporary literature of love--the French knightly romances, whose translations began to appear in England towards the end of the twelfth century. The central figure of these romances is the knight, a symbol of courtoisie as he rode about the countryside displaying his nobility and prowess. It was his customary task to bring relief to the distressed and the suffering, but in the romantic tradition, the recipient of his attentions was most often a high-born lady victimized by various powers of evil. These ideals of chivalry and traditions of courtly love are here the conventions from which the religious image is created. In a dissertation entitled The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in English Literature,[28] Sister Marie De Lourdes Le May shows that in the Ancren Riwle

> the allegorization is distinctly of the knight in the sense of the amour-courtois literary convention, as distinguished from the figuration of Christ as a knight in the generic sense, namely, of a noble, valiant fighter.[29]

---

[28] Sister Marie De Lourdes Le May, The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in English Literature (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1932). Le May points out that "the Ancren Riwle has the earliest figuration in point of time, of Christ as a knight" (p. 1).

[29] Le May, p. 1. Sister Le May traces the evolution of the knight figure from epic warrior, as in the Song of Roland, through the refining influence of crusades when the religious allegories conventionally portray Christ as the Lover-knight of the Soul, and ultimately (beyond the time of the Ancren Riwle) to the knight as feudal warrior. At this point she comments: "Naturally, in this later allegorization it is the Christ of His Passion and His active life--His warfare against sin--that is picturized, not the tender Bridegroom of the Soul as St. Bernard so effectively represents Him" (p. 52).

That the anchoresses knew this literary tradition is implicit in its use as an instructional device. As Sister Le May points out, the whole force of the allegory would have been lost on the "gentle anchoresses" if they had not known how courtly knights were accustomed to behave.[30] On one point only does the author of the Riwle differ markedly from the courtly code, and that is in his censure of the lady for unreasonable aloofness. While such disdain is the desired feminine reaction in French chivalric romances, it is supreme folly in the image portrayed here: "Nere þeos ilke lefdi of vuele kunnes kunde, 3if heo ouer alle þing ne luue him her efter?" [Would not this lady be of a most perverse nature, if she did not love him, after this, above all things?] (390-91). In this manner the explication culminates in an appeal to the reason and the emotions in order to elicit a response of love.

On its literal level, this tale of an all-loving King who comes to the aid of a disdainful lady is an appealing romantic image. Interpreted allegorically, it becomes an image of mankind being redeemed by Christ. The powerful king whose love was "biturnd upon hire, so vnimete swuðe" [fixed upon her with such boundless affection] (388-89) is an analogy for God casting his glance of love upon the soul. The "lefdi þet was mid hire uoan biset al abuten, and hire lond al destrued, ⁊ heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle" [lady who was besieged by her foes within an earthen castle, and her land all destroyed, and herself quite poor] (388-91) is the soul in its

---

[30] Le May, p. 4.

customary helplessness before the allurements of temptation; the "earthen castle" is a commonplace among metaphors for the body. Within the context of the Ancren Riwle, the meaning arising from the analogy is intended for personal application. While the love and devotion of the anchoress for God is portrayed in the image of the bride, God's preceding and reciprocating love for her is conveyed through the image of the courteous knight. In the homiletic manner of teaching by allegory, the love of God is not only identified and defined by means of this external image, but conveyed in delightful terms as well. As Schofield points out, "The Church profited by the fascination of romantic tales and gained a hearing for religious truths by conveying them in similar guise."[31]

While the author is idealistic in his portrayal of the anchorite life, he is nevertheless truthful in conveying its harsh realities. To attain the Bridegroom a price must be paid in deprivation and constant watching, and to be the support or "anchor" of the Christian people implies the loneliness experienced by the biblical night fowl under the eaves:

> Pe niht fuel iðen euesunge bitocneð recluses, þet wunieð, for þi, under chirche euesunge, þet heo understonden þet heo owun to beon of so holi liue þet al holi chirche, þet is al Cristene uolc, leonie ⁊ wreoðie upon ham, ⁊ heo holden hire up mid hore lif holinesse, ant mid hore eadie bonen . . . þe nihtfuel ulið bi nihte, ⁊ biȝit ine þeosternesse his fode: ⁊ also schal ancre fleon mid contemplaciun: þet is, mid heih ⁊ mid holi bonen bi nihte touward heouene, ⁊ biȝiten bi nihte hire soule uode. Bi nihte ouh ancre uorte beon waker ⁊ bisi abuten gostliche biȝete . . . vor þet is ancre rihte, muchel uor to wakien.

---

[31] William Henry Schofield, English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer (London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 406.

> [The night fowl in the eaves betokeneth recluses who dwell under the eaves of the church, that they may understand that they ought to be of so holy life that the whole holy church, that is, all Christian people, may lean and be supported upon them, and that they may bear her up with their holiness of life and their pious prayers. . . . the night fowl flieth by night, and seeks his food in the darkness; and thus shall the recluse fly with contemplation, that is, with high and with holy prayers, by night toward heaven, and seek during the night nourishment for her soul. In the night, the anchoress ought to be watchful and diligent about spiritual attainments. . . . for this is the duty of an anchoress--to watch much.
>
> (142-43)

This image is part of the context of a much larger image in the psalms where the psalmist, crying out on the day of distress, seeks to move God's will through his vivid images of loneliness and futility:

> For my days are vanished like smoke: and my bones are grown dry like fuel for the fire. I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered. I am become like to a pelican of the wilderness: I am like a night raven in the house. I have watched, and am become as a sparrow all alone on the housetop. My days have declined like a shadow, and I am withered like grass.
>
> (Ps. 101.4-5, 7-8, 12)

In homiletic tradition the sparrow is the lowliest of all birds. According to Ferguson, it symbolizes "the lowly, the least among all people, who were, nevertheless, under the protection of God the Father."[32] The "owl of the waste places," on the other hand, signifies meditation, night, and silence. Both Jobes and Ferguson point out that in Christian crucifixion scenes the owl is an attribute of Christ, who sacrificed himself to give light to those in darkness. In scenes of hermits at prayer, the owl symbolizes solitude and

---

[32] Ferguson, p. 26.

wisdom.[33] Because of its connection with this well-known psalm the night fowl in the Ancren Riwle necessarily carries the overtones of loneliness and suffering which the psalm is intended to convey.

Though the author exalts the life of piety chosen by the anchoresses, he allows no illusions about it. Toward the end of the treatise he summarizes succinctly his assessment of such a life:

> Al is penitence, ⁊ tet strong penitence, þet ȝe euer drieð, mine leoue sustren, and [al] þet ȝe euer doð of god, ⁊ al þet ȝe polieð. Al is ou uor martirdom ine so derful ordre: vor ȝe beoð niht ⁊ dei upe Godes rode.
>
> [All that ye endure, my dear sisters, and all the good you ever do, and all that you suffer is penance, and that, strong penance. It is all like martyrdom to you in so strict an order, for ye are night and day upon our Lord's cross.]
>
> (348-49)

---

[33] Jobes, p. 1222; Ferguson, p. 21.

CHAPTER III

IMAGERY OF TEMPTATION

Adversities in the anchorite life manifest themselves mainly as temptations to be overcome by means of various ascetic practices. Since much of homiletic instruction urges its listeners to be watchful and diligent against temptation, many traditional images have evolved with regard to this topic. In Part IV of the Ancren Riwle, where the author instructs "de multis temptationibus exterioribus et interioribus" [concerning many temptations, external and internal] (178-79), the imaginative range of homiletic allegory is amply demonstrated.

The instructions centre on the three traditional categories of temptation, which the author identifies as follows:

> Vre widerwines beoð preo: þe ueond, þe world, ⁊ ure owume vleahs, as ich er seide. Lihtliche ne mei me nout oðerhwule icnowen hwuc of þeos preo weorreð him: uor euerichon helpeð oðer; þauh þe ueond kundeliche egged us to atternesse, as to prude, to ouerhowe, to onde, ⁊ to wreððe, ⁊ to hore attri kundles, þet beoð her efter inemmed. Þet fleasch put propremen touward swetnesse ⁊ touward eise, ⁊ touward softnesse; ant te world bit mon ȝiscen worldes weole, ⁊ wunne, ⁊ wurschipe, ⁊ oðer swuche giuegouen, þet bidweolieð kang men to luuien one scheadewe.
>
> [Our foes are three: the devil, the world, and our own flesh, as I said before: nor is it easy, at times, for a man to know which of these three attacketh him: for every one of them helpeth each other. Yet the devil naturally inciteth us to malignant vices, as pride, haughtiness, envy and wrath, and to their pernicious progeny, which will be hereafter named. The flesh naturally inclines us to luxury, ease, and self-indulgence. And the world urges men to covet the world's wealth, and prosperity, and worship, and other such gewgaws,

and deludeth foolish men to fall in love with a shadow.]
(196-97)

These three sources of temptation may be better understood by considering certain characteristic attitudes held towards each by the people of the Middle Ages.

Disdain for the exterior world had been a distinctive feature of didactic and philosophic writings at least as far back as the Hellenistic period. Father McKenzie attributes this attitude to a certain futility of purpose with regard to life:

> In ancient Near Eastern mythology and in Greek philosophical and historical thinking the course of events is an endless chain, a treadmill, or a revolving circle. Ultimately the course of events becomes meaningless as a whole, for it leads to nothing and accomplishes nothing. In this view the individual person becomes if possible even more meaningless. Man lives in history and makes it; and if the story of the race as a whole is a pursuit of nothing, how can the individual person achieve anything? The tone of despair which is heard so often in the literature of Greece and Rome is deep . . . . For the men of the Hellenistic age human life was ruled by Fate or Fortune; human life did not make sense and was not supposed to, for Fate and Fortune are personifications of the irrational.[1]

This attitude was mitigated by the eschatology of Christianity, which replaced the notion of the perpetual treadmill with the conviction that the powers of evil must be finally overcome. For the individual there was the hope of life everlasting after the hostile elements of this life had been left behind. Because of this hope, the comprehensive symbol of wayfaring became an important analogy for the Christian experience. The view of this world as "only a way" is expressed succinctly by the author of the Ancren Riwle as follows:

---

[1] McKenzie, Power and Wisdom, p. 65.

> Þis world nis buten a wei to heouene, oðer to helle; ⁊ is al biset of helle muchares, þet robbeð al þe gold-hordes þet heo muwen underȝiten, þet mon oðer wummon i þisse weie openeð.

[This world is only a way to heaven or to hell; and is all beset with skulking thieves of hell, who rob all the treasures that they can discover, which man or woman open in this way.]

(150-53)

Although the image is valid for all who follow the Christian way of life,[2] it is adapted here for purposes of instruction in the Riwle. The certainty of temptation as well as its savage nature are depicted by the familiar journey through the wilderness with which the author compares the anchorite life:

> [V]re wiðerwines beoð swifture þen þe earnes: up oðe hulles heo clumben efter us, ⁊ þer fuhten mid us: ⁊ ȝet iðe wildernesse heo aspieden us to sleam.

[Our foes are swifter than the eagles: upon the hills they climbed after us, and there fought with us: and also in the wilderness they lay in wait to slay us.]

(196-97)

These bestial enemies, the carrion eagle and the stalkers of the wilderness, will attack on the heights of spiritual activity as well as in the wilderness of daily routine. In the metaphor, the "hul" becomes a symbol for the life of exalted piety; the wilderness, on the other hand, is interpreted by the author as a life "of ancre

---

[2] The New Testament indicates clearly that "Christianity" denotes a specific way of life and conduct; in the Acts of the Apostles the new religion is referred to, simply, as "the Way": "But Saul, still breathing threats of slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, that if he found any men or women belonging to this Way, he might bring them in bonds to Jerusalem" (Acts 9.1-2). See also Acts 19.9, 23; 22.4; 24.14, 22.

wununge" [solitude--monastic seclusion] (196-97). An analogy is made by the author to indicate the anchoresses' function in this figurative environment. Like the wild beasts of the wilderness who do not suffer the approach of man, but fly away when they hear or see him, so too the anchoresses should carefully shun the influence of the world. For medieval man, but especially for Religious, the things of this world were of value only insofar as they were a means to God.[3]

A further inference of the wilderness metaphor in the Riwle is that the anchoresses, by their vocation, are set apart from the larger Christian community. Precedent for this view is found in God's favouring of the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness (Exodus 13.7-34). After the Pharaoh has been persuaded to release the people of Israel, the Exodus account states:

> But [God] led them about by the way of the desert, which is by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. And marching from Socoth they encamped in Etham in the utmost coasts of the wilderness.
>
> (Exodus 13.18, 20)

Referring to this episode, the author comforts his sisters with the remfnder,

> Ipisse wildernesse wonde ure Louerdes folc . . . touward tet eadie lond of Jerusalem, pet he ham hefde bihoten.
>
> [In this wilderness journeyed our Lord's people . . . towards the blessed land of Jérusalem, which he had promised them.]
>
> (196-97)

---

[3] See "On Contempt of the World" from Peter Damiani's eleventh-century work, The Monastic Ideal in The Portable Medieval Reader, assembled & illuminated, James Bruce Ross & Mary Martin McLaughlin (New York: The Viking Press, 1960 [1949]), pp. 49-55.

The aspect of wilderness in the image of man as wayfarer is a long-established convention of moral instruction. In dealing with the symbolism of wilderness, Cirlot comments as follows:

> The Biblical prophets, in order to counter agrarian religions based on fertility rites (related, according to Eliade, to orgies), never ceased to describe theirs as the purest religion of the Israelites "when they were in the wilderness." This confirms the specific symbolism of the desert as the most propitious place for divine revelation, for which reason it has been said that "monotheism is the religion of the desert." This is because the desert, in so far as it is in a way a negative landscape, is the "realm of abstraction" located outside the sphere of existence, susceptible only to things transcendent. Furthermore, the desert is the domain of the sun, not, as the creator of energy upon earth but as pure, celestial radiance, blinding in its manifestation. Again: if water is associated with the ideas of birth and physical fertility, it is also opposed to the concept of the everlasting spirit; and, indeed, moisture has always been regarded as a symbol of moral corruption. On the other hand, burning drought is the climate par excellence of pure, ascetic spirituality--of the consuming of the body for the salvation of the soul. Tradition provides further corroboration of this symbolism: for the Hebrews, captivity in Egypt was a life held in opprobrium, and to go out into the desert was "to go out from Egypt."[4]

Wilderness imagery traditionally takes the following mystical interpretations. Allegorically, the "Waste Land" or desert signifies the world through which God's people must pass. On this level may be understood the unfamiliarity or alienation that the Church Militant experiences in the foreboding and hostile environment of the earth. Tropologically, the wilderness symbolizes the individual's personal encounter with the ways of this world which are incompatible with the spiritual life. In this respect, the wilderness journey denotes

---

[4] J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. from Spanish, Jack Sage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 76.

a purgation process,[5] the moral journey from sin to virtue which precedes the entrance to heaven. Anagogically, all must make this journey before they may enter the heavenly Jerusalem.[6] On all levels, the figure has application to the lives of the anchoresses as they travel their formidable road:

> ⁊ ȝe, mine leoue sustren, wended bi pen ilke weie towards te heie Jerusalem, to pe kinedome pet he haueð bihoten his icoren.
>
> [and ye, my dear sisters, are journeying by the same way towards the Jerusalem above--to the kingdom which he has promised his elect.]
>
> (196-99)

Aloofness from the physical world was accompanied by a disdain for the body as well. Among the characteristic aspects of medieval culture reflected in homiletic literature is the derogatory view of the body as burden to the soul. Perpetually in revolt against the higher faculties, the body must be "mortified and brought into subjection" (1 Cor. 9.27). The Ancren Riwle includes a typical passage illustrating this view:

> I pine licame is fulðe ⁊ unstrencðe. Nu, kumeð o pe vetles swuch ping ase [is] perinne. Of pine flesches vetles hwat cumeð perof? Kumeð perof smel of aromaz, oðer of swote healewi? Deale. Of te druie sprintles

---

[5] Cf. Joshue 5.5-6: "But the people that were born in the desert, [d]uring the forty years of the journey in the wide wilderness, were uncircumcised: till all they were consumed that had not heard the voice of the Lord, and to whom he had sworn before, that he would not shew them the land flowing with milk and honey."

[6] Paul says: "[F]or here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come" (Hebrews 13.14). A description of the heavenly Jerusalem is given in Apoc. 21-22.

bereð winberien? And breres bereð rosen, ⁊ berien, ⁊ blostmen? Mon, þi flesch, hwat frut bereð hit, in all his openunges? Amidden þe meste menkes of þine nebbe, þet is, þet feirest del bitweonen smech muðes ⁊ neoses smel, ne berest tu two purles, ase puh hit weren two priue' purles? Nert tu icumen of ful slim? Nert tu mid fulðe a ifulled? Ne schalt tu beon wurmes fode? Nu a uleih mei eilen þe, ⁊ makien þe to blenchen. Eaðe meiht tu beon prut! Philosophus: "Sperma es fluidum: vas stercorum: esca uermium."

[In thy body is uncleanness and infirmity. Now, there cometh out of a vessel such things as it contains. What cometh out of the vessel of thy flesh? Doth the smell of spices or of sweet balsam come thereof? God knoweth. Do dry twigs often bear grapes? And do briars . . . bear roses, and berries, and flowers. Man, what fruit doth thy flesh bear in all its apertures? Amidst the greatest ornament of thy face; that is, the fairest part between the taste of mouth and smell of nose, hast thou not two holes, as if they were two privy holes? Art thou not formed of foul slime? Art thou not always full of uncleanness? Shalt thou not be food for worms? Even now, a fly may hurt thee and cause thee to shrink. Truly thou mayest easily be proud! "Thou art," says the philosopher, "of slimy origin, a vessel of filth, food for worms."]

(276-77)

The author's instructions to the anchoresses are formulated with this basic attitude in mind. In his directions on fasting and discipline, for example, he writes:

Vet kelf ⁊ to wilde is þet fleschs þet awiliged so sone hit euer uetteð puruh este ⁊ puruh eise. . . . Vor al so sone so þet flesh haueð al his wil, hit regibbeð anon, ase uet kelf ⁊ idel. Þis fette kelf haueð þe ueondes strencðe to unstrencðen, ⁊ forte makien buwen touward sunne . . . . Auh ancre schal . . . temien ful wel hire fleschs, so sone heo iueleð þet hit awilegeð to swuðe, mid festen, mid wecchen, mid heren, mid heuie swinke, mid herde disciplines, wisliche þauh ⁊ warliche.

[A fat and frolicsome calf is the flesh, which groweth wild as soon as it becometh fat through abundance and ease. . . . For as soon as the flesh hath all its will, it immediately kicketh, like a fat and idle calf. This fat calf the fiend hath power to deprive of strength, and to incline toward sin . . . . But the anchoress shall . . . tame right well her flesh, as soon as she feeleth that it is growing too wild, with fasting, with watching, with hair-cloth, with hard toil, and severe discipline, wisely, however, and cautiously.

(136-39)

This notion that the flesh must be constantly mortified is found in the earliest patristic writings. According to Origen, the result of self-knowledge and examination of conscience will be to recognise that we have to take up arms against sin, which prevents us from reaching perfection; the goal is complete freedom from the passions, and in order to reach it there must be perpetual mortification of the flesh.[7] Such allegorical images may be properly traced to dualism and to the harsh asceticism which often resulted from this belief. Huyghe shows that it was the Gnostics, in the middle of the second century, who emphasized the dual (the spiritual and physical) nature of man. These early Gnostics regarded the soul as "divine in principle, but a prisoner of the evil world of the flesh."[8] In discussing its effects on art, Huyghe describes this attitude as follows:

> The concept of the world that developed under these diverse aspects could not but give rise to an art [in which] the body was compromised, whereas the soul was the instrument of salvation; the earth was matter, whereas heaven was light. The overwhelming development of monasticism which started in Egypt and Syria during the 4th century, and which had been heralded by the Thalians and by the Hellenistic sects as well as by the monasteries of the Essenes . . . was a sign of this abandonment of the world. As already attested by Pliny the Elder [23-79 A. D., Roman naturalist and writer], these people were "weary of life" and aspired, according to Philo, to relieve their souls "of the burden of sensations and the sensual world." . . . The earliest Christian art showed so great a disdain for the exterior world and so unique a preoccupation with the interior world that it reduced its characteristic forms to mere allusive signs.[9]

---

[7] Quasten, II, 96.

[8] Art and Mankind, p. 14.

[9] Art and Mankind, p. 16. Huyghe points out that after the fourth century this attitude was somewhat mitigated, but the influence remained for long after.

Dualism received further impetus in the third and fourth centuries through Manichaeism, a doctrine which emphasized the conflict between God and his adversary, a "God" of evil. This doctrine of light versus darkness, soul versus body, was revived by the Cathari[10] and brought from the East to Europe after the second Crusade (1147-49); by 1175 it had spread through Western Europe. Although the Church opposed this idea, the conflict between the spirit and the flesh remained fundamental to Christian thought throughout the Middle Ages.

The author of the Riwle is notably influenced by dualism in dealing with the matter of soul impeded by body. He reminds the anchoresses that

> Pet fleshs is her et home, ase eorðe, pet is et eorðe: ant for pui hit is cwointe ⁊ cwiuer, ase me seið, "pet coc is kene on his owune mixenne."
>
> [The flesh is here at home, as earth, upon earth; and therefore, it is brisk and bold, as it is said, "The cock is brave on his own dunghill."]
>
> (140-41)

Regarding the contamination that comes from the daily contact with others, he cites another expression of proverbial wisdom:

> Vor ne beo neuer so briht gold, ne seoluer, ne iren, ne stel, pet hit ne schal drawen rust of on pet is irusted, uor hwon pet heo longe liggen togederes.
>
> [For neither gold, nor silver, nor iron, nor steel, is ever so bright that it will not draw rust from a thing that is rusty, if they lay long together.]
>
> (159-60)

Along with the prevalent disdain for the world and the flesh as sources of temptation, the Middle Ages possessed a distinct

---

[10] "Cathari" was a general designation for the dualistic sects of the Middle Ages. They were also called Albigenses because of their geographic distribution in Alba, Piedmont, or perhaps the Province of Albania. They were condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

fear of the devil as the instigator of evil. Warnings against the wiles of the devil are numerous in both the Bible and in the patristic writings. John's Gospel relates that Jesus himself described the devil as a deceiver; seeking only to destroy:

> The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie he speaks from his very nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
>
> (John 8.44)

St. Peter also cautions against the temptations of the devil in the familiar "roaring lion" simile: "For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5.8). St. John likewise uses animal imagery in the Apocalypse, where those who have resisted temptation are likened to those who have conquered "the beast."[11] Irenaeus of Lyons sees the devil as the anti-Christ, the demoniac counterpart of Christ, because he is the summing up of all apostasy, injustice, malice, false prophecy, and treachery. He refers to the Devil as "this beast . . . made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit."[12] In iconography after 800, the devil

---

[11] John sees in his vision "those who had overcome the beast and its image . . . standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Apoc. 15.2). Cf. also Apoc. 12.9: "And that great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, who leads astray the whole world . . . ."

[12] Quasten, I, 312. Irenaeus was born c.140 and died probably at the end of the second century. Many of his writings are concerned with the refutation of Gnosticism.

was often depicted as a man with hair dishevelled, carrying a fire-hook, a common attribute of the devil deriving from the concept of hell-fire. His seductive arts are expressed by elegant movements. As the image developed, the appearance of pelt, tail, claws and horns gave ever-increasing emphasis to the animal-like, grotesque quality, and in medieval art he was generally depicted as an animal.[13]

This tempter of great skill, who sought to seduce even Christ,[14] is described through various images in the Ancren Riwle. In a passage demonstrating the efficacy of humility as a defence against temptation, the author draws an analogy with a wrestler overcoming his opponent. The sketch portrays the mind of Christ analysing the tactics of the devil:

> Puruh þe strencðe of edmodnesse [Crist] awerp þene wurse . . . of helle. Þe 3eape wrastlare nimeð 3eme hwat turn his fere ne cunne nout, þet he mid wrastleð: vor, mid þen ilke turn he mei hine unmunlunge aworpen. Al so dude ure Louerd. He iseih hu ueole þe grimme wrastlare of helle breid up on his hupe, ⁊ werp, mid þe haunche turn, into golnesse, þet rixleð i þe lenden. He hef an heih monie, ⁊ twende abuten mid ham, ⁊ sweinde ham puruh prude adun into helle grunde. O, þouhte ure Louerd þet al þis biheold, "I schal don þe enne turn þet tu ne cuðest neuer, ne ne meiht neuer cunnen"--þene turn of edmodnesse, þet is, þe uallinde turn. And feol urom heouene to þer eorðe, ⁊ streihte him so bi þer eorðe, þet te feond wende þet he were al eorðlich: ⁊ was bicherd mid tet turn, ⁊ is 3ete eueriche deie of edmode men ⁊ wummen þet hine wel cunnen.

---

[13] Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, I, 144. Miss Schiller points out that the animal depictions were prevelant until the fifteenth century when the Devil was once more commonly shown in human guise.

[14] Accounts of Christ's temptation in the desert after his forty days of fast are given in Matthew 4.1-11; Mark 1.12-13; Luke 4.1-13.

> [Through the strength of humility [Christ] overcame the giant of hell. The wary wrestler carefully observes what strategem his mate, with whom he wrestles, is ignorant of; for with that particular strategem he may overthrow him unawares. Thus did our Lord. He saw how many the fierce wrestler of hell caught up on his hip, and threw, with the cast of the thigh, into lechery, which rules in the loins. He heaved up many, and turned round with them, and swung them through pride down into the depth of hell. O! thought our Lord when he beheld all this, "I shall practise upon thee a sleight that thou never knewest nor ever could know"--the sleight of humility, which is the falling stratagem. And he fell from heaven to the earth, and stretched himself in such a manner on the earth, that the fiend thought that he was all earthly; and he was outwitted by that stratagem, and is still every day, by humble men and women who are well skilled in it.]
>
> (280-81)

This image may have been suggested by analogies to athletic contests in the earliest patristic writings. In his famous second letter to the Corinthian Church, St. Clement of Rome speaks of certain martyrs having "safely reached the goal in the race of faith." Applying the image to the Corinthians, Clement says: "We are in the same lists, and the same contest awaits us."[15]

The author of the Riwle also uses images of contemporary medieval life to describe the attacks of the devil. In graphic animal analogy, the devil is seen as the "dog of hell" to be repulsed immediately:

> Uor þi, mi leoue suster, so sone so þu euer underȝitest þet tes dogge of helle kumeð snakerinde mid his blodie vlien of stinkinde þouhtes, ne lie þu nout stille, ne ne site nouðer uorte loken hwat he wule don, ne hu ueor he

---

[15] "Clement I," Catholic Encyclopedia, IV, 16. Clement was Pope from 92-101, and the letter referred to above was written c.96. Quasten (I, 54) points out that the Isthmian athletic contests held near Corinth might explain the imagery used here by Clement. The Olympic games were terminated by the order of Emperor Theodosius in 394.

wule gon? ne ne seie pu nout slepinde, "Ame dogge go herut? hwat wultu nu herinne?" Pis tolleð him touward pe. Auh nim anon pene rod stef, mid nemmunge iðine muðe, ⁊ mid pe merke iðine hond, mid pouhte iðine heorte, ⁊ hot him ut hetterliche--pe fule kur dogge--⁊ liðere to him luðerliche mid te holie rode steue. Lif him stronge bac duntes? pet is to siggen, rung up ⁊ sture pe? hef up on heie eien ⁊ honden touward heouene: gred efter sukurs.

[Wherefore, my dear sister, as soon as ever thou perceivest that this dog of hell cometh sneaking with his bloody fleas of corrupt thoughts, lie thou not still, nor yet sit, to see what he will do, or how far he will go; and say not to him in a sleepy manner, "Friend dog, go out hence; what wouldest thou have here?" This enticeth him toward thee. But take up at once the staff of the cross, at the same time pronouncing the sacred name with thy mouth, with the sign in thy hand, and with thought in thy heart, command him sternly to go out--the foul cur dog; and beat him severely with the staff of the holy rood. Give him hard back strokes; that is to say, rouse up and bestir thyself: lift up your eyes and hands toward heaven, cry for succour.]

(290-91)

In Christian writings, the dog usually typifies heresy, paganism and Satan.[16] Although the dog often portrays fidelity or domesticity in both art and literature, by the same token it sometimes symbolizes dirty habits and lowliness. This latter aspect is used by the author of the Riwle as he continues his instruction:

Spit him amidde pe bearde to hoker ⁊ to schom, pet flikereð so mit pe, ⁊ fikeð mid dogge uawenunge, hwon he uor so liht wurð--for pe licunge of o lust one hond hwule, cheapeð pine soule, Godes deore spuse, pet he bouhte mid his blode, ⁊ mid his deorwurðe deaðe oðe deore rode.

[Spit, in contempt and scorn, upon his beard who thus dangleth about thee, and flattereth thee with the fawning of a dog, when, for so small a price--for the momentary gratification of a desire, he tries to purchase thy soul--God's dear spouse, which he bought with his blood, and with his precious death on the dear cross.]

(290-91)

---

[16] Jobes, pp. 456-57; Ferguson, pp. 9-10.

In this typical homely metaphor the author provides a graphic representation of the devil's art of seduction. Though the animal imagery is not grotesque, it is loathsome enough to convey the utter contempt with which temptation should be repulsed.

Life for the early Christian as well as for medieval man meant continuous conflict against these three sources of temptation--the world, the flesh and the devil. Metaphors of warfare are often used by the biblical writers to describe the life of man on earth. In the New Testament, Paul exhorts Timothy to "fight the good fight" (1 Tim. 1.18), and again, to "conduct [himself] in work as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2.3). Warfare imagery is used in the Apocalypse, where the final conflict between the forces of good and evil is described:

> And there was a battle in heaven; Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven.[17]

In homiletic literature, encounter with these forces of evil is traditionally pictured as man facing an army arrayed for battle. The exempla give numerous accounts of strange encounters with Satan and his helpers,[18] as illustrated in one instance by the author of the

---

[17] Apoc. 12.7-8. See also Apoc. 20.9-10.

[18] Such encounters are prominent in medieval didactic works as well. In Piers the Ploughman, for example, these forces of evil are pictured as warriors jousting with Christ:

> So I asked Faith the meaning of all this stir--"Who was going to joust in Jerusalem?"
>
> "Jesus," he said, "to win back Piers' fruit, which the Devil has claimed."
>
> "Is Piers in this city?" I asked.

Riwle:

> Penchеð her of þe tale, hu þe holi mon in his fondunge iseih biwesten ahan him so muchel uerde of deoflen þet he uorleas uor muchele drede þe strencðe of his bileaue.
>
> [Think here of the story, how the holy man in his temptation saw opposed to him on the west such a large army of devils, that through great terror he lost the firmness of his faith.]
>
> (232-33)

In the Riwle, however, temptation as a warfare has its strongest precedent in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul writes:

> For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high. Therefore take up the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of justice, and having your feet shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace, in all things taking up the shield of faith, with which you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, that is, the word of God.[19]

To Paul's military terminology, the author of the Riwle adds a contemporary flavor. He depicts temptations beleaguering the anchoresses in the guise of enemies attacking a feudal castle.

> He looked at me keenly and answered, "Jesus, out of chivalry, will joust in Piers' coat-of-arms, and wear His helmet and mail, Human Nature; He will ride in Piers' doublet, that no one here may know Him as Almighty God. . . .
>
> "Who will fight with Jesus?" I said, "The Jews and Scribes?"
>
> "No," said Faith, "the Devil, False Judgement, and Death . . . ."

William Langland, Piers the Ploughman, trans. J. F. Goodridge (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971 [1959]), p. 218.

[19] Ephes. 6.12-17. Paul's metaphor echoes Wisdom 5.17-21. See also Ps. 45.

The imagery of the castle siege is employed at length in connection with the defence of Lady Chastity, "Godes spuse" [God's spouse] (60-61), who is hemmed in by the armed forces of the foul harlot, lechery. Lechery first seeks entrance to the castle through the eyes:

> [E]ien beoð þe earewen ⁊ te ereste armes of lecheries prieches; ⁊ also ase men weorreð mid preo kunne wepnen, mid scheotunge, mid speres ord, ⁊ mid sweordes egge, al riht so, mid þen ilke wepnen, þ is mid scute of eiȝn; mid spere of wundinde word; mid sweorde of deadliche hondlunge, weorreð lecherie, þeo stinkinde hore, wiþ þe lefdi of chasteté, þ is Godes spuse.
>
> [The eyes are the arrows and the first arms of lechery's stings; and, like as men fight with three kinds of weapons, with shooting, with spear's point, and with sword's edge, just so with the same weapons, that is, with eye-shot, with spear of wounding word, with sword of deadly handling, doth lechery, the foul harlot, fight against the lady, Chastity, who is God's spouse.]
>
> (60-61)

Having once gained entrance in this manner through the eyes, the harlot pursues her purpose by means of other senses--speaking, handling and feeling:

> Erest heo scheot þe earewen of þe liht eien, þ fleoð lichtliche uorð, ase earewe þ is ividered, ⁊ striked ide heorte. Þerefter heo schekeð hire spere, ⁊ nehlecheð up on hire, ⁊ mid schekinde word ȝiueð speres wunden. Sweordes dunt is adunriht þ is þe hondlunge; vor sweord smit of neih, ⁊ ȝifð deaðes dunt.
>
> [First, she shoots the arrows of the light eyes, that fly lightly forth like a feathered arrow and stick in the heart; then she shaketh her spear, and cometh nigh to her, and with shaking word giveth spear's wounds; sword's dint is downright, that is, the handling, for a sword smites in close fight and giveth a death's stroke.]
>
> (60-61)

The attack calls to mind accounts of the medieval crusade, when "day and night without ceasing, darts, arrows, and sling stones rained on

the beleaguered city."[20]

Conforming with homiletic tradition, as always, the author does not allow for any misunderstanding regarding the meaning of his imagery but follows through with a complete explication. His analogy is directed specifically toward the anchoress:

> And nis heo to muche cang, oðer to folherdi, þ halt hire heaued baldeliche uorð vt ipen open kernél, þeo hwile þ me mit quarreaus widuten assaileð þene castel? Sikerliche vre vo, þe weorreur of helle, he scheot, ase ich wene, mo cwarreaus to one ancré þen to seouene þ seouenti lefdies ide worlde. Þe kerneaus of þe castel beoð hire huses purlea. Ne aboutie heo nout vt et ham, leste heo þes deofles quarreaus habbe amidden þen eien, er heo lest wene; vor he assaileð efre. Holde hire eien inné, vor beo heo ereat ablend, heo is eð fallen. Ablinde þe heorte, heo is eð ouercumen, þ ihrouht sone mid sunne to grunde.
>
> [And is not she too forward or too fool-hardy, who holds her head boldly forth in the open battlements while men with crossbow-bolts without assail the castle? Surely our foe, the warrior of hell, shoots, as I ween, more bolts at one anchoress than at seventy and seven secular ladies. The battlements of the castle are the windows of their houses. Let her not look out at them, lest she have the devil's bolts between her eyes, before she even thinks of it; for he is always attacking. Let her keep in her eyes, for if she is once blinded, she is easily overcome. Blind the heart, she is easily conquered, and soon brought to the ground by sin.]
>
> (61-63)

The analogy between body and castle is exceptionally appropriate in that numerous facets of comparison are possible. The body becomes the "castle" within which dwells the heart (or the soul),

---

[20] Amy Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 345. Miss Kelly is describing the siege of Acre by Richard, Coeur-de-Lion, in June, 1191, after that city had been occupied by Saladin. The source materials she uses include chronicles, biographies, literature (secular and ecclesiastic), epistles and commentaries of the twelfth century "expanded by a decade or two at either end" (Preface, p. v). It is probable that at least some of the writings which gave such vivid accounts of crusade battles were available to the author of the Ancren Riwle.

while the body's members are portrayed as the outward defences of the castle. The individual components of this imagery have traditional symbolism. From earliest times, the heart was considered to be the source of understanding, love, courage, devotion, sorrow, and joy.[21] Its deep religious meaning is expressed in the Bible, as the following passage from the Book of Kings shows:

> And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature: because I have rejected him, nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.
>
> (1 Kings 16.7)

This significance of the heart is intended when the author of the Riwle quotes Solomon: "Mid alle cunne warde, dohter, seiþ Solomon þe wise, wite wel þine heorte, uor soule life is in hire; 3if heo is wel iwust" ["With every kind of watchfulness, daughter," saith Solomon the wise, "guard well thy heart, for in it is the life of the soul, if it is well governed"] (48-49; Proverbs 4.23). Given the active imagination of the homiletic writers it is not difficult to see how, with the suggestions implied in the words "wite well," the allegory of the soul or heart as a guarded castle developed.[22]

---

[21] Ferguson, p. 67.

[22] Owst (Literature and Pulpit, pp. 77-86) traces the image to various other biblical texts, showing that the idea of refuge or protection which is innate in the figure stems from the word "castellum" of the Vulgate. This word is translated in the English version as "village," such as the village in which the apostles found the foal to be ridden by Christ on Palm Sunday (Matt. 21, 2); or as "house," for the home of Martha and Mary where Christ often sought refuge from the cares of his public life (Luke 10, 38). Owst traces the evolution of the image in homiletic writings of the medieval period,

Temptations gain entrance to the heart by means of the five senses, as the analogy shows. Early in his treatise the author writes: "Pe heorte wardeins beoð pe vif wittes--sihðe ϸ herunge, spekunge and smellunge, ϸ eueriches limes uelunge" [The wardens of the heart are the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smelling, and every member's feeling] (48-49). Accordingly, the five senses must be carefully guarded in order to maintain the purity of the "castle occupant," the heart. This point is carefully repeated later in the instruction:

> Pe heorte is wel iloked ȝif muð ϸ eien ϸ earen wisliche beoð ilokene: vor heo, ase ich seide er, beoð pe heorte wardeins' ϸ ȝif pe wardeins wendeð ut, pe heorte bið biwust vuele.
>
> [The heart is well kept, if the mouth, eyes, and ears are wisely kept. For these, as I said before, are the wardens of the heart; and if the wardens go out, the heart is ill-guarded.] (104-105)

The senses, as strongholds of virtue, are analogous to the defences of a medieval castle. The discussion of thirteenth-century architecture in Art and Mankind gives notable emphasis to the fortification of castles at that time:

> With the growing efficiency of weapons, castles had to be adapted for more active defence. The crusaders profited by their experience of the fortifications of Constantinople and Antioch to adopt the projecting mural tower built at intervals along the wall. Early examples of such flanking towers are at Dover (late 12th century) and Framlingham

---

dealing with such prominent works as the "Castle of Manseoul" in the Lambeth Homilies and the Chasteau d'Amour (thirteenth century) of Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln. In the latter, the idea of Christ sheltered in the womb of Mary is a prominent connotation of the image. There is no evidence, however, that the specific works dealt with by Owst influenced the author of the Ancren Riwle; the castle image is one of a consistent body of traditional Christian symbolism.

(c. 1200). The development of the bailey defences, with crenelations and machicolations of the walls and a fortified gateway with barbican, rendered the keep virtually redundant.[23]

These medieval defences are inherent in the castle imagery of the Ancren Riwle. In dealing with the safeguards against carnal temptations, the author compares the efficacy of prayer with the workings of the castle's machicolations:

> Eadie bonen softeð ⁊ paieð ure Louerd; auh teares doð him strencðe. . . . Hwon hit so biualleð pet me assailed buruhwes oðer castles, peo pet beoð wiðinnen helded schaldinde water ut, ⁊ werieð so pe walles: ⁊ ȝe don al so. Ase ofte ase pe ueond assaileð ouwer castel, ⁊ te soule buruh, mid inward bonen, worpeð ut uppon him schaldinde teares . . . Per ase pis water is, aikerliche pe ueond fliheð, leste heo beo uorschalded.
>
> [Devout prayers soften and appease our Lord; but tears constrain him. . . . When it happens that towns or castles are stormed, those that are within pour out scalding water, and thus defend the walls. Even so do ye. As often as the foe stormeth your castle and the soul-town, with your inward prayers cast out upon him scalding tears . . . . Wherever this water is, the fiend never fails to run away, lest he should be scalded.]
>
> (244-47)

Extending his image, the author shows how the devil's attacks may be restrained by a "ditch of humility":

> [K]astel pet haueð deope dich abuten, ⁊ water beo iðe dich--pe kastel is wel kareleas aȝean his unwines. Kastel: pet is eueriche god mon pet te ueond weorreð. Auh habbe ȝe dope dich of deope edmodnesse ⁊ wete teares perto--ȝe beoð strong kastel. Pe weorreur of helle mei longe assailen ou, ⁊ forleosen al his hwule.
>
> [The castle that hath a deep ditch around it, if there be water in the ditch, the castle is secure against its enemies. Castle: that is, every good man on whom the fiend maketh war. But if ye have the deep ditch of deep humility, and the water of tears in it, ye are a strong castle. The warrior of hell may besiege you long, and lose all his labour.]
>
> (246-47)

---

[23] Art and Mankind, p. 382.

By means of this contemporary allegory, the author explains not only the nature of temptation but also the manner of resistance.

Castle imagery is used again as an encouragement in the fight against temptation, for the author reminds his anchoresses that a siege continues only so long as the besieged are not defeated:

> Þe tur nis nout asailed, ne þe castel, ne þe cite hwon heo beoð biwunnen? al so þe helle weorrur ne asailed nenne mid fondunge þet he haueð in his hond? auh deð heo þet he naueð nout.
>
> [The tower is not attacked, nor the castle, nor the city, after they are taken; even so the warrior of hell attacks, with temptation, none whom he hath in his hand; but he attacketh those whom he hath not.]
>
> (228-29)

He adds the warning that those who are not tempted may well suspect that they are already won over.

In homiletic tradition this image which describes on the literal level the defences of a medieval castle is interpreted on the allegorical level as the Christian struggle against the adversary. The castle siege is a picture of the Church on earth being bombarded by the forces of evil. Viewed tropologically, the "castle" becomes the individual Christian assailed by the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Anagogically, the castle is seen in homiletic writings as the heavenly Jerusalem. As Cirlot remarks:

> This is a complex symbol, derived at once from that of the house and that of the enclosure or walled city. Walled cities figure in mediaeval art as a symbol of the transcendant soul and of the heavenly Jerusalem. Generally speaking, the castle is located on the top of a mountain or hill, which suggests an additional and important meaning derived from the symbolism of level. Its shape, form and colour, its dark and light shades, all play an important part in defining the symbolic meaning of the castle as a whole, which, in the broadest sense, is an embattled, spiritual power, ever on the watch.
>
> (p. 37)

In the Ancren Riwle, the author is concerned mainly with the tropological level applied specifically to the moral welfare of the individual anchoress. His castle imagery applies most immediately to the anchoress's careful guarding of her virtue, for nothing less would be expected of a bride of Christ.

In imagery related to that of the castle siege, the author draws a comparison between the situation of the anchoresses under temptation and an army under attack. When an assault comes, he instructs the sisters to call upon Christ, the "stone of help," to renew their strength:

> 3if þe ueondes ferde, þet beoð his tentaciuns, asailed ou swuðe, onswerieð him ⁊ sigged . . . Le Louerd, no wunder nis? we beoð ilogged her bi þe, þet ert ston of help, ⁊ tvr of treouwe sucurs, ⁊ castel of strencðe, ⁊ te deofles ferde is woddre uppon us, þen uppon eni oðer.
>
> [If the army of the fiend, which is his temptations, strongly assail you, answer him and say . . . Yea, Lord! it is no wonder. We are encamped here beside thee, who art the stone of help, and tower of true safety, and castle of strength, and the devil's army is more enraged against us than against any other.]
>
> (262-65)

He urges them to stand their ground rather than turn their backs and be slain in the fight, and this can only be done by sending messengers to the Prince for help:

> Ne wendeð 3e neuer þene rug, mine leoue sustren, auh wiðstondeð þe ueondes ferde amidde þe uorhefde . . . mid stronge bileaue? . . . sendeð beoden uor sondesmon anon efter sukurs to þe Prince of heouene.
>
> [Never turn ye your back, my dear sisters, but withstand the fiend's army among the foremost . . . with strong faith; . . . send prayers quickly, as your messenger, to the Prince of Heaven for succour.]
>
> (264-65)

Again he quotes what is probably a contemporary proverb: "And nis he a kang knit þet secheð reste iðe uihte, ⁊ eise iðe place?" [And

is not he a foolish knight who seeketh rest in the combat and repose in the lists?] (358-59).

Although the most prominent allegories of temptation in the Riwle find their basis in the conventions of medieval warfare, there are others less dramatic and perhaps more positive. One of the most touching of these is the homely vignette illustrating God's way of allowing his loved ones to be tempted. The author tells the anchoresses that when our Lord suffers us to be tempted, he

> plaieð mid us, ase þe moder mid hire ȝunge deorlinge: vliheð from him: ⁊ hut hire: ⁊ let hit sitten one, ⁊ loken ȝeorne abuten, ⁊ cleopien, Dame! dame! ⁊ weopen one hwule: and þeonne mid ispredde ermes leapeð lauhwinde uorð, ⁊ cluppeð ⁊ cusseð, ⁊ wipeð his eien. Riht so, ure Louerd let us one iwurðen oðer hwules, ⁊ wiðdraweð his grace, ⁊ his cumfort, ⁊ his elne, þet we ne iuindeð swetnesse in none þinge þet we wel doð, ne sauur of heorte: ⁊ tauh, iðet ilke point, ne luueð he us ure leoue ueder neuer þe lesce, auh he deð hit for muchel luue þet he haueð to us.
>
> [playeth with us, as the mother with her young darling: she flies from him, and hides herself, and lets him sit alone, and look anxiously around, and call Dame! dame! and weep a while, and then leapeth forth laughing, with outspread arms, and embraceth and kisseth him, and wipeth his eyes. In like manner, our Lord sometimes leaveth us alone, and withdraweth His grace, His comfort, and His support, so that we feel no delight in any good that we do, nor any satisfaction of heart; and yet, at that very time, our dear Father loveth us never the less, but doth it for the great love that he hath to us.]
>
> (230-32)

This personal concern for each one is dealt with again in a subsequent analogy which shows how Christ bears the burden of temptation with man:

> Hwon two bereð one burðene ⁊ te oðer bileaueð hit, þeonne mei þe þet holdeð hit up iuelen hu hit weihð. Al so, leoue suster, þe hwule þet God bereð mid te þi tentaciun, nostu neuer hu heui hit is: ⁊ forði; et summe chere, he let þe one, þet tu understonde þin owune feblesce, ⁊ cleopie efter his helpe, ⁊ ȝeie iude

efter him. Ȝif he is to longe, hold hit wel up þeo hwule, þauh hit derue þe sore. Vor hwoso is siker of sukurs þet him schal sone kumen, ⁊ ȝelt tauh up his kastel to his wiðerwines, is swuðe to blamen.

[When two persons are carrying a burden, and one of them letteth it go, he that holdeth it up may then feel how it weigheth. Even so, dear sister, while God beareth thy temptation along with thee, thou never knowest how heavy it is, and therefore, upon some occasion, he leaveth thee alone, that thou mayest understand thine own feebleness, and call for his aid, and cry loud for him. If he delays too long, hold it well up in the mean time, though it distress thee sore. For he that is certain that succour shall soon come to him, and yet yields up his castle to his enemies, is greatly to blame.]

(232-33)

In this manner of allegorical invention, the instructions on temptation are attractively and effectively presented.

Though the imagery of temptation reflects certain bleak attitudes towards life on earth, the medieval mind did not look upon the "Christian way" as entirely impossible. While the devil may be deceitful,

God wule . . . ȝiuen ou liht wiðinnen, him uorto iseonne, ⁊ icnowen . . . ⁊ purh þet sihðe ȝe schulen iseon alle þes deofles wieles.

[God will give you . . . inward light to see him and know him . . . and, through that sight, ye shall see all the wiles of the devil.]

(92-93)

Similarly, the burden of the flesh can be dealt with effectively, for

þuruh þe heuischipe of [þe soule, þe heui ulessis] schal iwurðen ful liht: ȝe, lihture þen þe wind is, ⁊ brihture þen þe sunne is, ȝif hit foluweð hire her, ⁊ ne draweð hire nout to swuðe into hire lowe kunde.

[through the nobleness of the soul the [heavy] flesh shall become full light, yea, lighter than the wind, and brighter than the sun, if it follow the soul here, and draw her not too strongly into its own base nature.]

(140-41)

Though the author tells the anchoresses that "al þis lif her is ase uiht" [all this life here on earth is as a fight] (358-59), he hastens to remind them that this refers only to the life of man on earth:

> [A]uh efter þisse uihte her, 3if we wel uihteð, menke ⁊ reste abit us et hom, in ure owune londe, þet is heoueriche.
>
> [But after this fight here, if we fight well, honour and repose await us at home, in our own land, which is the kingdom of heaven.]
>
> (358-59)

Nevertheless, the numerous images describing temptation bring to mind an awareness of the constant danger of sin, an evil which the anchoresses--and indeed, those of the lay state as well--would seriously endeavour to avoid.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGERY OF SIN

In the strongly religious atmosphere of the Middle Ages, sliding from temptation into sin was the great tragedy to be avoided at all costs. Accordingly, the literature of moral instruction sought to portray sin in as repulsive a manner as possible. Conforming with this convention, the author of the Ancren Riwle uses a variety of images to convey the heinous nature of sin and its consequences. In his discussion of lying, he uses a homely but repugnant metaphor designed to create aversion for this sin:

> Pe ilke peonne þ stureð hire tunge ine leasunge, heo makeð of hire tunge cradel to pes deofles bearn, 7 rockeð hit 3eorneliche ase nurice.
>
> [She, then, who moveth her tongue in lying, maketh of her tongue a cradle to the devil's child, and rocketh it diligently as nurse.]
>
> (82-83)

Because sin is traditionally described as "born of the devil," the sin of lying is pictured appropriately here as a child. The image is extended to create a cradle of the tongue for this child to lie in--with perhaps an intended pun on the word "lie." Two other kinds of evil speech, backbiting and flattery, receive a yet more revolting treatment. Personified, "peos two menestraus serueð hore louerde, þe deofle of helle" [these two jugglers serve their lord, the devil of hell] (84-85) in a nauseous task which, as the author himself admits, is foul in the telling:

> Heo beoð pes deofles gongmen, ⁊ beoð wiðuten ende in his gong huse. Pes fikelares mester is to wrien, ⁊ te helien pet gong purh: ⁊ tet he deð as ofte ase he mid his fikelunge, ⁊ mid his preisunge heleð ⁊ wrihð mon his sunne, uor noðing ne stinkeð fulre penne sunne: ⁊ he heleð hit ⁊ wrihð so pet he hit nout ne istinckeð. Pe bacbitare unheleð ⁊ unwrihð hit ⁊ openeð so pet fulðe þ hit stinkeð wide. Pus ha beoð bisie i pisse fule mester, ⁊ eiðer mid oðer striueð her abuten.
>
> [They are the devil's dirt-men, and wait continually in his privy. The office of the flatterer is to cover and to conceal the hole of the privy; and this he doth as oft as he with his flattery and with his praise concealeth and covereth from man his sin; for nothing stinketh fouler than sin, and he concealeth and covereth it, so that he doth not smell it. The backbiter discloseth and uncovereth it, and so openeth that filth that it stinketh widely. Thus, they are busy in this foul employment, and strive with each other about it. Such men stink of their stinking trade, and make every place stink that they come to.]

Graphic imagery of this type may well have effected the desired moral response--careful avoidance of evil speech!

Among the most vivid allegorical images portraying the nature of sin, however, are those involving analogies with animals. Some of these animal figures originate in scripture, such as the metaphor from Ecclesiastes which the author uses in his commentary on backbiting. The nature of backbiting is like the action of a serpent:

> Pe neddre, seið Salomon, stingeð al stilliche: ⁊ peo þ spekeð bihinden þ heo nolde buioren, heo nis nowiht betere. Iherest tu hu Salomon eueneð bacbitare to stinginde neddre? So heo is sikerliche. Heo is neddre kundel: ⁊ peo pet spekeð vuel bihinden berð atter in hire tunge.
>
> ["The serpent," saith Solomon, "stingeth quite silently; and she who speaketh behind [another] what she would not before is not a whit better." Hearest thou how Solomon eveneth a backbiter to a stinging serpent? Such she certainly is. She is of serpents' kindred, and she who speaketh evil behind [another] beareth poison in her tongue.][1]
>
> (82-84)

---

[1] Ecclesiastes 10.11: "If a serpent bite in silence, he is nothing better that backbiteth secretly."

Animal analogy of this kind has always been popular in homiletic tradition. Apart from the Bible itself, the early collections of "natural histories" and the later medieval bestiaries became a prominent source of animal lore in homiletic writings, as has already been noted in Chapter I above. But while the manner in which animal analogies were presented remained similar to the practice in these works,[2] the morals and explications derived were often changed to suit the purposes of the homilist and his immediate topic of instruction. With the perpetuation of these changes in subsequent instructions, there evolved a conventional set of animal interpretations peculiar to the homiletic tradition. This latter symbolism is used by the author of the Riwle in a further description of backbiting. In this analogy, the habits of the raven become a representation of the backbiter's behaviour:

> Þe bacbitare cheoweð ofte monnes fleschs ine uridawes, ⁊ bekeð mid his blake bile o cwike charoines ase þe þet is þes deofles corbin of helle. Let wolde he teteren ⁊ pileken, mid his bile, roted stinkinde fleshs, as is reafnes kunde: þet is, 3if he uolde siggen non vuel bi non oðer bute bi þeo þ rotieð and stinkeð al ine fulðe of hore sunnen, hit were 3et þe lesse sunne: auh lihted upon cwike fleschs, teterеð ⁊ tolimeð hit: þet is, he misseið bi swuche þet is cwic in God.
>
> [The backbiter often cheweth man's flesh on Friday, and pecketh with his black bill living carcases; as he that is the devil's raven of hell; yet, if he would tear in pieces and pluck with his bill rotten stinking flesh, as raven's nature is; that is, if he would not speak evil

---

[2] First the nature of the animal was given, then a moral was drawn under the heading "signification," or significatio. Often the verbal description was accompanied by a graphic iconographic portrait as well. See T. H. White, The Bestiary.

> against any but those who are corrupt and stink in the filth of their sins, it were yet the less sin: but he lighteth upon living flesh; teareth and dismembereth it; that is, he slandereth such as are alive in God. He is too greedy a raven, and too bold withal.]
>
> (83-85)

Such imagery is directly in line with the earliest Christian writings. In the Epistle of Barnabas, the raven is listed as unclean because it is one of the birds symbolic of such men as seize upon their daily bread by rapine and all manner of iniquity rather than earn it by honest toil and sweat.[3] Ferguson describes the symbolism of the raven as follows:

> Because of the blackness of its plumage, its supposed habit of devouring the eyes and the brain of the dead, and its liking for spoiled flesh, the raven was selected as a symbol of the Devil who throws the soul into darkness, invades the intelligence, and is gratified by corruption.[4]

But besides the traditional animal figures of the Bible and homily, comparisons with commonplace creatures and their associations also contribute to the animal imagery describing sin in the

---

[3] Quasten, I, 86. This letter is one of the earliest records defending allegorical explanation of the Old Testament doctrines and commandments. It has been attributed to Barnabas, the companion and co-worker of St. Paul, but the letter nowhere asserts that Barnabas is its author (I, 84).

[4] Ferguson, p. 24. It should be noted again, however, that this symbolism is valid only within the context of a given instruction. In keeping with certain legends regarding the raven, the interpretation of its symbolism may be favourable. This is illustrated by Jobes, who discusses the raven as follows: "In Christian art this bird was often shown with Saints Anthony, Apollinaris, Benedict, and Vincent, because a raven guarded them and provided them with food when they lived as hermits, thus signifying God's providence. It also typifies cruelty, death, the Devil or sin. In Hebrew lore it was a white bird, but turned black because it failed to return to the ark, and hence symbolizes corruption, morbidness, restlessness" (p. 1325). Jobes notes also that its black color is a color of the devil (p. 221).

Ancren Riwle. The teaching on despair and presumption, for example, is presented in the guise of a contemporary hunting scene, where the devil and his "greyhounds," despair and presumption, are prepared to entrap the "unhappy beast," man's soul:

> Peos two unðeawes, untrust and ouertrust, beoð þes deofles tristren, þer þet wrecche beȝst selden etsterteð. Tristre is þer me sit mid þe greahundes forte kepen þe hearde, oðer tillen þe nettes aȝean han. Touward on of þeos two is al þet he sleateð: vor þer beoð his nettes, ⁊ þer beoð his greahundes, untrust ⁊ ouertrust, igedered togederes: and beoð of alle sunnen next þe ȝete of helle.
>
> [These two sins, despair and presumption, are the devil's tristres, where the unhappy beast seldom escapeth. A tristre is where men wait with the greyhounds to intercept the game, or to prepare the nets for them. All that he driveth is toward one of these two [points]; for there are his nets, and there his greyhounds, Despair and Presumption, are met together, and of all sins they are nearest the gate of hell.][5]
>
> (232-35)

Though animal images are used occasionally to allegorize the virtues of man,[6] they most often emphasize the distortion of human nature to the likeness of a beast. The aptness of animal imagery for this purpose is illustrated by the author of the Riwle in a descriptive metaphor regarding the sin of anger. He explains the nature of anger as follows:

> Wreððe is a uorschuppild, ase me telleð ine spelles: vor heo bireaueð ⁊ binimeð mon his rihte wit, ⁊ chaungeð al his chere, ⁊ forschuppeð him urom mon into bestes cunde.
>
> ["Anger is a sorceress," as is said in many stories; for it bereaveth and depriveth man of his right understanding, and changeth his whole countenance, and transforms him from man into beast's nature.]
>
> (120-21)

---

[5] Morton includes a footnote explaining a "trista" as a station or post in hunting (p. 333).

[6] Cf. the pelican, sparrow and owl discussed above, Chapter II, pp. 29-32; 49-51.

Because of this "conversion" by the sorceress Anger, people begin to behave like the wild animals, as the author shows:

> Wummone uroð is wuluene: ⁊ mon wroð is wulf, oðer leun, oðer unicorne. Þe hwule þet euer wreððe is ine wummone heorte, þauh heo uersalie, ⁊ sigge hire vres, ⁊ hire Pater nosters, ⁊ hire Auez, al ne deð heo bute peoteð: heo naueð bute ase peo þ is iwend to wuluene, i Godes eien: ⁊ is ase wuluene stefne in his swete earen.
>
> [An angry woman is a she-wolf, and an angry man is a wolf, or a lion, or a unicorn. As long as anger is in a woman's heart, though she say her versicles, and her hours, and her paternosters, and her aves, yet she doth nothing but howl. In everything she is only as one that is changed into a she-wolf in the sight of God; and in all as the voice of a wolf in his sweet ears.]
>
> (120-21)

The proverbial "wolf in sheep's clothing" suggests cruelty, cunning, rapaciousness, ferocity, trickery and untamed nature.[7] With this symbolism in mind, the author shows how the normally gentle nature of man is transformed by anger into the untamed nature of a beast. He continues his description of that passion as follows:

> [W]reððe is a wodschipe. Wroð mon is he wod? Hu loked he, hu spekeð he, hu vareð his heorte wiðinnen him? Hwuche beoð wiðuten alle his lates? He ne icnoweð nenne mon. Hu is he mon þeonne? . . . Mon is kundeliche milde: auh so sone so he his mildheortnesse vorleoseð, he uorleoseð mønnes kunde, ⁊ wreððe, þe uorschuppild, uorschuppeð him into bestes kunde . . . .

---

[7] Jobes, p. 1688. The main biblical passages contributing to this symbolism are Matthew 7.15: "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves;" and John 10.12: "But the hireling, who is not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf snatches and scatters the sheep." In Fables of Aesop, trans. S. A. Handford, illus. Brian Robb (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969 [1954]), fables 28, 30, 32, 34 and 36 deal with a wolf worrying a flock of sheep (pp. 28-38). Fable 36 describes specifically the incident of a wolf putting on a sheepskin to trick the shepherd.

> [Anger is a kind of madness. Is not an angry man mad? How doth he look? How doth he speak? How fareth his heart within? Of what kind is all his outward demeanour? He regardeth no man. How, then, is he a man? . . . Man is gentle by nature; but as soon as he loseth his gentleness he loseth man's nature, and Anger, the sorceress, transformeth him into the nature of a beast. . . . .]
>
> (120-21)

Christian exegetes have repeatedly pointed out that scripture strongly insists on the difference between man and animals. Within a context describing the horror of bestiality that all mankind should entertain, Albert Gelin comments on this differentiation in the Bible:

> This is the significance of the parade of the animals in the most ancient account of creation (Gn. 2:18ff.). God makes every kind of animal file by man so that he can search among them for a companion who will be his exact complement, both physically and morally--and no such helpmate is found.[8]

Father Gelin shows, further, that the resemblance of man to God rests principally in man's power of dominion over lower creatures, citing Psalm 8 as his main reference in this regard.[9] According to these biblical precepts, then, the author of the Riwle urges that anger not be allowed to reduce man to the level of beasts. Ever mindful that his material is being presented to a specific audience, however, he

---

[8] Albert Gelin, S. S., The Concept of Man in the Bible, trans. David M. Murphy (Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1968), p. 30.

[9] Ps. 8.6-9: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: and hast set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen: moreover the beasts also of the fields. The birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, that pass through the paths of the sea." Cf. also Ecclesiasticus 17.4: "He put the fear of him upon all flesh, and he had dominion over beasts and fowls."

again relates his image directly to the sisters, showing that angry behaviour is not proper to a spouse of Jesus Christ:

> Ant hwat 3if eni ancre, Jesu Cristes spuse, is forschupped to wuluene--nis þet muche seoruwe? Nis þer, þeonne, bute vorworpen sone þet ruwe vel abute þe heorte, ⁊ mid softe seihtnesse makien hire smeðe ⁊ softe, ase is cundeliche wummone hude. For mid te wuluene uelle, no þing þet heo deð nis God licwurðe ne icweme.

[And what if any recluse, Jesus Christ's spouse, is transformed into a she-wolf? Is it not a great grief? There is, then, nothing to be done but to cast away quickly the rough skin that is about the heart, and with mild conciliation make her smooth and soft, as woman's skin is naturally. For, with the wolf's skin, nothing that she doth is acceptable or pleasing to God.]

(120-21)

He argues, further, that if the anchoresses rebel against their abusive treatment by others, fighting back in kind, they lose their true nature and behave like animals:

> Þif þu berkest a3ein þu ert hundes kunnes: ant 3if þu stingest a3ean mid attri wordes, þu ert neddre kundes, ⁊ nout Cristes spuse.

[If thou barkest again, thou art of the nature of a dog. If thou stingest again with venomous words, thou art of serpent's nature, and not the spouse of Christ.]

(122-23)

As his final point of persuasion for controlling anger, the author reminds them of Christ's example of meekness when, during his ignominious treatment at the crucifixion, he spoke nothing, "non more þen a schep" [no more than a sheep] (122-23).[10] Unlike cattle or swine at slaughter, the lamb makes no sound or motion of resistance;

---

[10] Cf. Isaias 53.7: "He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth;" also, Jeremiah 11.19: "And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim." In the New Testament, see John 1.29, 36; John 19.36; 1 Peter 1.19; 1 Cor. 5.7; Apoc. 5.8, 12-13; Apoc. 13.8.

consequently it has become the symbol of emotional stability, gentleness and guilelessness.[11] The gentleness of the lamb is here effectively contrasted with the savage nature displayed by wolf, dog, and venomous serpent. In this manner, then, animal analogy is carefully manipulated to emphasize the odiousness of sin.

Perhaps the most prominent animal figures of the Riwle, however, are those which embody the concept of the seven deadly sins. In an extension of his wilderness imagery, the author introduces dangers of a more hostile nature than the alien and arid landscape. He warns of certain aggressive enemies lurking in the wilderness:

> Goð, þauh, ful warliche: vor iðisse wildernesse beoð monie vuele bestes: liun of prude, neddre of attri onde, vnicorne of wreððe, beore of dead slouhðe, vox of ȝiscunge, suwe of ȝuiernesse, scorpiun mid te teile of stinkinde lecherie: þet is, golnesse.
>
> [Go, however, very cautiously: for in this wilderness there are many evil beasts--the lion of pride, the serpent of venomous envy, the unicorn of wrath, the bear of dead sloth, the fox of covetousness, the swine of greediness, the scorpion with the tail of stinking lechery, this is lustfulness.] (198-99)

As an associated quality of the journey metaphor, this set of beasts highlights the difficulties of the Christian, and more specifically, the eremitic way of life. Their portrayal is an expression of the early Christian doctrine that all man's wickedness is rooted in a limited number of evil propensities called cardinal sins. While the idea that man's evils are traceable to distinct deviations in the

---

[11] Jobes, p. 1422. The contrast between cattle and sheep is intimated in Osee 4.16: "For Israel had gone astray like a wanton heifer: now will the Lord feed them, as a lamb in a spacious place."

human will was already inherent in the philosophies of the pre-Christian era, the doctrine of certain cardinal sins as bases for these deviations was first formulated by the Fathers of the early Christian Church. For purposes of moral instruction, the patristic writers carefully listed and ordered man's evils, and the categories they established produced the concept of the "cardinal" or "capital" sins. As early as 383, Evagrius of Pontus (d.399) made such categories a basic part of his moral teachings when, in his Antirrhetikos, he deals with the eight evil spirits which keep the monk under constant attack. For each of the eight vices Evagrius investigates the causes and diabolical influences at work, and concludes with a quotation from the Bible that would enable the monk to defeat the attack. This work is probably the first literary witness to the doctrine of the eight vices, which preceded that of the seven capital sins.[12]

Almost from their inception as a doctrine, the cardinal sins were rendered in allegorical form, since images which gave them physical shape seemed best to convey the abstract notions of the vices. In attempting to embody the seven cardinal sins, religious writers formulated a series of allegorical images which became an established iconography of the group. Gregory the Great, for example,

---

[12] Quasten, III, 171-72. See also Morton W. Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins (Michigan: State College Press, 1952), p. 57. Bloomfield points out that the term "deadly sins" is rarely applied to the cardinal sins before the fourteenth century (p. 44).

pictured the seven sins as "springing from the poisonous root of pride and attacking us as an army."[13] The analogy of the plant and the army is a familiar comparison in subsequent writings.[14] Vivid portraits of animals, however, whose peculiar characteristics exemplified the vices, were particularly popular since they were largely self-revealing. The use of animals to symbolize the capital sins goes back at least as far as the early fifth century when Nilus' discussion of Ira "makes comparison of an angry man to a boar, lion, fox and poisonous viper."[15] This tradition of describing the sins in terms of specific animals is used by the author of the Ancren Riwle. His animal vices, along with their explication through the introduction of whelps or other appropriate progeny, draw upon a rich fund of homiletic symbolism. The variation in this vast amount of symbolism is again evident in the interpretation associated with each of the animal similitudes.

Though the lion seems particularly appropriate for the embodiment of pride, its traditional portrayal in religious writings

---

[13] Bloomfield, Seven Deadly Sins, p. 73.

[14] See, for example, The Parson's Tale in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957 [1933]), ll. 387-89, p. 239; l. 956, p. 260.

[15] Bloomfield, p. 60. Bloomfield shows, further, that according to the popular attitude towards sin in the Middle Ages, demons were often regarded as specific sins or vices, and "were considered Lieutenants of the devil who had the power of entering the bodies of animals or men and of working deadly harm" (p. 62).

and iconographies is one of nobility.[16] Gertrud Schiller traces this quality of nobility to biblical sources, where the courage and strength of the lion are shown to be desirable traits:

> Jacob, blessing his twelve sons, likened Judah to a lion's whelp and prophesied that his progeny should rule "until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." [Genesis 49, 9-10]. Revelation 5, 5 takes up this Messianic prophecy and says: ". . . behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book." In the iconography of the Incarnation of Christ the lion is an allusion to this prophecy and thus to the royal descent of Christ and the renewal of the sovereignty of Judah of the House of David through the "Son of the Highest" as Gabriel says in his salutation. [Luke 1, 32 ff].[17]

In her dictionary of symbols, Miss Jobes discusses the lion as "king of beasts," symbolic of action, authority, divine strength, pride and power, though indicating also that it sometimes signifies "beastliness" (p. 999). With respect to iconography, Ferguson says the lion is emblematic of strength, majesty, courage and fortitude; he also concedes, however, that in rare instances the lion, "because of its pride and fierceness, was used as a symbol of the Prince of Darkness" (pp. 20-21). To support this latter symbolism, Ferguson cites Psalm 90.13 which is interpreted as Christ triumphing over the devil: "You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot" (p. 21). The undesirable aspects

---

[16] Joseph Hall in Selections from Early Middle English, 1130-1250, Part II, Notes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920) shows as well that some of the interpretations used in the Riwle are "not in the manner of the Bestiaries, where the lion and the unicorn are types of Christ" (Note 3, pp. 377-78). See also White: pp. 8-9 for the lion; p. 21 for the unicorn.

[17] Schiller, I, 22.

of the lion's pride have other biblical sources as well, as the Book of Job illustrates. Speaking about wisdom and the mysteries of the earth's interior, Job says: "The children of the merchants have not trodden it, neither hath the lioness passed by it" (Job 28.8). Using the lion as a figure for pride, then, conveys the notion that a noble nature may be tainted by misuse. With this purpose in mind, the author lists the nine whelps of the Lion of Pride: Vain Glory, Indignation, Hypocrisy, Presumption, Disobedience, Loquacity, Blasphemy, Impatience and Contumacy (199)--all of which have their roots in misguided pride. The foremost among these whelps, Vain Glory, was considered so serious a sin that it was counted as an eighth member in the early accounts of the capital sins.[18] To this feature of pride, as well as to the eight other aspects of that sin, only a brief explanatory sentence is allotted, since the names of the whelps are intended to speak for themselves. It is pointed out, however, that there are other facets of pride besides these: "[m]onie mo hweolpes þen ich habbe inempned" [many more whelps than I have named] (200-201). The anchoresses are warned against trifling with any of these whelps, lest a monstrous pride develop within them:

> Hwose haueð eni unðeau of þeo þet ich er nemde, oðer ham iliche, heo haueð prude sikerliche. Hu se euer hire kurtel beo ischeaped oðer iseouwed, heo is liunes make þet ich habbe ispeken of, ⁊ fet his wode hweolpes wiðinnen hire breoste.

---

[18] This was true of the early writings of the desert Fathers. St. Gregory the Great finally fixed the number at seven (Bloomfield, p. 72).

> [Whosoever hath any of those vices which I have named before, or any like them, she certainly hath pride. In whatsoever fashion her kirtle is shaped or sewed, she is the lion's companion, of which I have spoken above, and nourishes his fierce whelps within her breast.]
>
> (200-201)

The Serpent of venomous envy is described as "þe olde moder of þe attri neddre of helle" [the old mother of the venomous serpent of hell] (200-201). This image, in which the serpent is identified simultaneously with Satan, temptation and sin, becomes an appropriate figure for envy, since the temptation in the Garden of Eden is often attributed, by tradition, to the devil's envy of mankind.[19] Referring to the serpent's connection with the temptation in Paradise, Jobes shows that the serpent is a symbol of the "fall from Divine grace . . . a sign of destructiveness, loathsomeness and obstructiveness" (p. 1419), while the Oxford Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities speaks of it as "generally typifying the Evil One" (p. 78). By extension of this symbolism, the serpent embodies a variety of evils in homiletic tradition, as indicated in a treatise by Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403) entitled Panarion, or Medicine Chest. Quasten explains that Epiphanius's Greek title finds its explanation "in the author's intention to furnish an antidote to those who have been bitten by the serpent of heresy and to protect those who have remained sound in their faith."[20] There is also a

---

[19] The serpent's part in the temptation is described in Genesis 3.1-5, 13-15. This biblical account does not imply envy.

[20] Quasten, III, 387. It should be noted, however, that the serpent, like the lion, often has favourable significance. It is a symbol of life and health in the caduceus, the emblem of medicine. Cf. Numbers 21.8-9: "And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent,

long-standing tradition of the serpent as symbol of evil in devotional art. Clara Erskine Clement describes some of these artistic representations:

> The serpent, another emblem of sin, is sometimes placed beneath the feet of the Virgin; sometimes twined around a globe, to indicate the power of sin over the entire world. In some symbolic pictures of the crucifixion the serpent lies dead at the foot of the cross, or, if alive, looking impotently up at the second Adam upon the tree of our salvation, as before, according to art, he looked triumphantly down upon our first parents, from the tree of our fall.[21]

In the Ancren Riwle, "seoue kundles" [a brood of seven] (200-201) stems from the Serpent of venomous Envy and among these Ingratitude ranks as the first born. Though the author presents no justification for including this sin among the brood of Envy, he conveys the impression that it is a hateful vice indeed, much more offensive than is generally believed:

> Of þisse unðeauwe me nimeð to lutel ȝeme: ant is, þauh, of alle, onloðest God, 7 mest aȝean his grace.
>
> [Of this vice men take too little heed, although it is, of all others, one most hateful to God, and most opposed to his grace.]
>
> (200-201)

---

and set it up for a sign: whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed." The serpent is also regarded as a symbol for cleverness or wisdom: "Behold, I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves. Be therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves" (Matthew 10.16).

[21] Clara Erskine Clement, A Handbook of Legendary and Mythological Art, p. 4.

The remaining six immediately pertinent to Envy are listed as Rancor, Grieving at the good of another, Glad of his evil, Exposing faults, Backbiting, and Upbraiding (201). Apart from Backbiting, which has received extensive treatment elsewhere in the Riwle (see pp. 77-80 above), these offspring of "the old mother of the venomous serpent of hell" are given no further explication beyond their names.

The capital sin of wrath is embodied in the legendary unicorn, which traditionally symbolizes courage and daring, but also ferocity and pugnacity. These qualities spring from the familiar unicorn-and-maiden tale, a myth portraying "the power of love and purity over savagery."[22] Describing the unicorn in this myth, Cirlot shows that Honorius of Autun in his Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae accentuates the unicorn's fierceness, though he makes it a symbol of Christ. Cirlot quotes Honorius as follows:

> The very fierce animal with only one horn is called unicorn. In order to catch it, a virgin is put in a field; the animal then comes to her and is caught, because it lies down in her lap. Christ is represented by this animal and his invincible strength by its horn. He, who lay down in the womb of the Virgin, has been caught by the hunters; that is to say, he was found in human shape by those who loved him.[23]

Cirlot comments further on the evil characteristics of the unicorn as a traditional aspect of that animal's description in the earlier natural histories. He notes that

---

[22] Jobes' interpretation, pp. 1625-26.

[23] Cirlot, p. 338. Honorius of Autun was a theologian, philosopher, and encyclopedic writer who flourished between the years 1106 and 1135.

> in Antiquity the unicorn appears on occasion with certain evil characteristics. The Physiologus Graecus comments that it is "an animal fleet of foot, single-horned and harbouring ill will towards men." As Jung has observed, the Church does not recognize this negative side of the unicorn.[24]

In his version of the myth, Ferguson also describes the unicorn as "a small animal, similar in size to a kid, but surprisingly fierce and swift, with a very sharp single horn in the centre of its forehead" (p. 27). The symbolism of the unicorn in Christian art is interpreted by Schiller as follows:

> In the High Middle Ages, the unicorn--a white fabulous beast resembling a horse, which legend held could be tamed only in the lap of a virgin--was used in Christian art either for the sake of his power, to symbolize Christ, or, with a virgin, as a symbol of the Incarnation. The unicorn, and especially the legend of the unicorn hunt, was besides a favourite motif in profane art. . . . From the second half of the twelfth century onwards the unicorn symbolizing the Incarnation of God was sometimes included in the illustrations of the Nativity. . . . [Sometimes] the girl tames the unicorn by laying her arms round its neck; in other representations she grasps its horn--spirally twisted, according to Greek legend--the sign and seat of the creature's supernatural power.[25]

---

[24] Cirlot, p. 338. Cf. Hall's comment, Footnote 16, p. 88 above. The Physiologus Graecus is probably a recension of the so-called Physiologus, an early Christian work describing animals real or fabulous and giving each an allegorical interpretation. Originally written in Greek at Alexandria, the book appeared probably in the second century, though some place its date at the end of the third or the fourth century. See "Physiologus," Catholic Encyclopedia, XII, 68-69.

[25] Schiller, I, 52-53. Miss Schiller notes, in conclusion: "The unicorn hunt can only be explained as a product of Catholic popular piety during the waning Middle Ages; the Council of Trent in 1563 prohibited its use in art" (pp. 54-55).

In the Ancren Riwle, contrary to Jung's observation, the unicorn is associated with its legendary ferocious qualities. The author states this specifically as his reason for choosing the unicorn to symbolize wrath in his instructions: "Pe Unicorne of Wreððe . . . bereð on his neose pene horn pet he asneseð mide alle peo pet ha areacheð" [The unicorn of Wrath . . . beareth on his nose the horn with which he butteth at all whom he reacheth] (200-201). To this animal he apportions six whelps--aspects of wrath which, again, need no explanation beyond their name: Contention or Strife, Rage, Reproach, Cursing, Striking, and finally, Wishing Evil upon others (200).

Because of its size, lumbering gait, and lengthy hibernation period, the bear is an apt figure for the sin of sloth. Jobes notes that clumsiness and uncouthness are among its traditional significations (p. 189). In one of Aesop's fables, a fox reports the bear to be a "lazy-bones."[26] The Bear of heavy Sloth in the Ancren Riwle has eight whelps, each representing a progressive stage in the development of this sin and culminating in the capital vice itself. Beginning with Torpor, "pet is wlech heorte: pet schulde leiten al o leie ine luue of ure Louerd" [that is, a lukewarm heart, which ought to light up into a flame in the love of our Lord] (202-203), the sin develops into Pusillanimity, Dulness of heart and Idleness (203). These stages soon lead to Grudging, deadly Sorrow for the loss of anything except sin only, and Negligence (203). Finally, the sinner

---

[26] Fable 61, Fables of Aesop, p. 63.

falls into the worst form of sloth, namely, Despair. This last whelp, we are told, "is grimmest of alle: uor hit to-cheoweð ⁊ to-uret Godes milde milce, ⁊ muchel merci, ⁊ his vnimete grace" [is the fiercest of all, for it gnaweth and wasteth the benignant kindness, and great mercy, and unlimited grace of God] (202-203).[27]

Covetousness is portrayed in the guise of a fox. This animal traditionally displays characteristics of cunning and guile in its endeavour to grasp what does not belong to it. Kenneth Varty describes the legend which attributes these qualities to the fox:

> Physiologus relates of the fox that he is a very crafty animal. When he is hungry and can find no prey, he entices it thus; he seats himself in a warm place where there is chaff, or else casts himself on his back and holds his breath and swells up his body completely, so that he appears dead. The birds believe that he is really dead, and they fly down in order to eat him up; but he springs up and catches them and eats them up. So also is the Devil very crafty in his ways. He who would partake of flesh dies. To this flesh belong adultery, covetousness, lust, murder.[28]

As an extension of these traits, Cirlot shows that the fox was also a symbol for the devil during the Middle Ages, "expressive of base attitudes and of the wiles of the adversary" (p. 108). Both the cunning and the grasping nature of the fox are operative in the Riwle's description of the fifth deadly sin. Covetousness, the author writes, is compared to the fox for at least two reasons:

---

[27] Cf. the description of Despair as one of the devil's greyhounds, p. 81 above.

[28] Kenneth Varty, Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1967), p. 91. See also fables 1-15, Fables of Aesop, pp. 3-17; Ferguson, p. 16.

> [M]uch gile is iðe uoxe, ⁊ so is ine ȝiscunge of worldliche biȝeate: and on oðer reisun is: þe uox awurieð al enne floc, þauh he ne muwe bute one wrechliche uorswoluwen.
>
> [There is much guile in the fox, and so is there in covetousness of worldly possessions; another reason is, the fox worrieth all the sheep in a flock, although he can ravenously devour only one.]
>
> (202-203)

The sins evolving from this Fox of Covetousness are described in the naming of its twelve whelps: Treachery, Guile, Theft, Rapine, Extortion, Compulsion, False testimony, Simony, Tribute, Usury, Unwillingness to give or lend, and sometimes Murder (203). In keeping with the medieval disdain for worldly things, the author concludes that rather than covet material goods, one should strive to have as little as possible:

> Þet is riht religiun, þet euerich, efter his stat, boruwe et tisse urakele worlde so lutel so heo euer mei, of mete, of cloðe, of eihte, ⁊ of alle worldliche þinges.
>
> [This is true religion--that everyone, according to his station, should borrow from this frail world as little as possible of food, clothes, goods, and of all worldly things.]
>
> (203-204)

The proverbial feeding habits of the pig have made this animal a long-standing symbol for gluttony and, by extension, greediness. Allegories of the pig's habits are used in early exegetical and homiletic literature, as in the Epistle of Barnabas where the author insists upon man's renunciation of the various sins symbolized by the unclean animals. Quasten paraphrases the salient passage as follows:

> Swine, for example, are numbered among forbidden animals, because there are men who resemble swine, which forget the hand that feeds them when they are surfeited with food.[29]

---

[29] Quasten, I, 86. See Footnote 3, p. 80 above.

Ferguson points out, further, that in Christian art the hog is used to represent the demon of sensuality and gluttony (p. 18). The fox of Aesop's fable calls the pig a "senseless brute" (fable 61, p. 63). Though the pig has numerous other symbolic meanings,[30] its use in the Ancren Riwle has to do with intemperance of all kinds. Accordingly, the Swine of Greediness has young born out of season, so that ths aspects of gluttony are given such self-evident names as Too Early, Too Daintily, Too Voraciously, Too Largely, and Too Often (205). The names suffice to illustrate that things which are good in themselves can become tainted by excess. With regard to this capital sin the author's concern for his three young anchoresses is not very great, however, for he tells them confidently: "Ich speke scheortliche of ham: for ich nam nout ofdred, mine leoue sustren, pet ȝe ham ueden" [I speak of them briefly; for I am not afraid, my dear sisters, that ye feed them] (204-205).

The subdued tone of the instructions on these six capital sins stands in contrast to the comparatively emotional treatment of the seventh, lechery. This latter area of morality was notably emphasized in the Middle Ages, especially in the devotional and didactic writings. In the Ancren Riwle, lechery receives the longest and most vehement discussion among the capital sins, being regarded by the author, apparently, as more loathsome than the previous six. We are told that the Scorpion of Lechery has such a progeny,

---

[30] Jobes names, among others, the traditional filth, lethargy, mental darkness and sensuality (p. 1270).

> þet in one wel itowune muðe hore summes nome ne sit nout uorto nemnen: uor þe nome one muhte hurten alle wel itowune earen, ⁊ fulen alle clene heorten.
>
> [that it doth not become a modest mouth to name the names of some of them; for the name alone might offend all modest ears, and defile all clean hearts.]
>
> (204-205)

Though the author mentions the more "familiar" names such as Whoredome, Adultery, Loss of Virginity, and Incest (205), adding a graphic account of the "courtship" which soon leads to a fall, he assures the anchoresses that there are many more sins among the progeny of this diabolical scorpion:

> Ich ne der nemen þeo unkundeliche kundles of þisse deouel scorpiun, attri iteiled. Auh sori mei heo beon þet mid fere, oðer wiðuten, haueð so iued eni kundel of golnesse, þet ich ne mei speken of uor scheome, ne ne der uor drede, lest sum leorne more vuel þen heo con, ⁊ þerof beo itempted.
>
> [I dare not name the unnatural offspring of this diabolical scorpion with the venomous tail. But sorry may she be who, with or without a companion, hath so fed any of the progeny of licentiousness--which I cannot speak of for shame, and dare not for dread--lest some one should learn more evil than she knoweth, and be thereby tempted.]
>
> (206-207)

Traditionally, the scorpion has been regarded as a symbol for treachery. Ferguson points out that the poisonous sting of its tail causes great agony to the person who is stung. Describing its symbolism, Ferguson says:

> Because of the treachery of its bite, the scorpion became a symbol of Judas. As a symbol of treachery, the scorpion appears on the flags and shields held by the soldiers who assisted at the Crucifixion of Christ.[31]

---

[31] Ferguson, p. 25. With regard to the agony of the scorpion's sting, cf. Apoc. 9.5: "and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man."

Jobes notes that the scorpion is the Hebraic-Christian symbol of evil or treachery (p. 1408).

This treacherous side of the scorpion's nature accounts for its choice as symbol of lechery in the Ancren Riwle:

> Pe scorpiun is ones cunnes wurm þet haueð neb, . . . sumdel iliche ase wummon, ⁊ is neddre bihinden, makeð feir semblaunt, ⁊ fikeð mid te heaued, ⁊ stingeð mid te teile. Þet is lecherie: þet is þes deofles best, þet he let to chepinge ⁊ to euerich gederinge, ⁊ cheapeð hit forto sullen, ⁊ biswikeð monie puruh þet heo ne biholdeð nout bute þet feire heaued. Þet heaued is biginninge of golnesses sunnen, ⁊ te licunge, þeo hwule þet hit ilest, þet puncheð so swuðe swete. Þe teil, þet is, þe ende þerof, þet is sor of-punchung þerof, ⁊ stingeð her mid atter of bitter bireousinge ⁊ of dedbote.
>
> [The scorpion is a kind of worm that hath a face, as it is said, somewhat like that of a woman, and is a serpent behind; putteth on a pleasant countenance, and fawns upon you with her head, but stingeth with her tail. Such is lechery, which is the devil's beast, which he leads to market, and to every place where people are gathered together, and offereth it for sale, and cheateth many, because they look only at the beautiful head. The head is the beginning of incontinence, and its delight, which, while it lasts, seemeth so very sweet. The tail, that is, the end thereof, is sorrowful repentance of it; and it stingeth her with the venom of bitter compunction, and penance.][32]
>
> (206-208)

The author concludes with the observation that he who would buy a horse or an ox, and would look only at the head, would be a foolish purchaser indeed. He exhorts the anchoresses, when "þe deouel beodeð

---

[32] This description of the scorpion represents another familiar pattern of medieval thought, this time with regard to women. Aelfric of Eynsham, in his writing on Herodias, comments: "Verily there is no worm-kind nor wild beast-kind like in evilness to an evil woman" (Catholic Homilies as quoted in "Aelfric of Eynsham," English Spiritual Writers, p. 6).

forð his best" [the devil presenteth his beast] (208-209), to go around it, view the tail, and quickly flee away. The length and intensity of this explication seem hardly appropriate for the three gentle ladies living in complete seclusion. His instruction seems to be carried, here, by what may be indicative of the author's regular preaching duties in which he is accustomed to addressing lay people of varying degrees of virtue.[33]

At the conclusion of his discourse on the seven capital sins, the author reverts to his wilderness image, reminding the sisters that they will meet such animals on their journey through the eremitic life:

> Þus, mine leoue sustren, iðe wildernesse ase 3e goð inne, mid Godes folke, toward Ierusalemes lond, þet is, þe riche of heouene, beoð swuche bestes, 7 swuche wurmes: ne not ich none sunne þet ne mei beon iled to one of ham seouene, oðer to hore streones.

---

[33] Owst confirms the antiquity of much of the traditional pulpit language, including the vehemence of many medieval homilies on fornication (Literature and Pulpit, pp. 265 ff.). On the other hand, homilies of this nature addressed to nuns seem to have been quite appropriate in some situations. Not all religious of the time had chosen their vocation as willingly as the three anchoresses of the Ancren Riwle, as E. K. Miliken points out in English Monasticism Yesterday and Today (London: Harrap, 1967): "During the Middle Ages their motives for 'taking the veil' could range from the desire to follow such a life as a vocation, or to enter it as a refuge for widows. Moreover, due to the lack of careers for girls at this time, life in a convent was the only alternative to marriage, and the aristocracy of the day were frequently responsible for making nunneries into dumping-grounds for unwanted girl children" (p. 81). Eileen Power also describes this situation in Medieval English Nunneries c.1275-1335 (Cambridge: University Press, 1922). She speaks of the chanson de nonne, the song of the nun who is unwillingly professed, and cites it as a favourite theme in medieval popular poetry (p. 34).

> [Thus, my dear sisters, in the wilderness in which ye are journeying with God's people toward Jerusalem's land, that is, the kingdom of heaven, there are such beasts and such worms; nor do I know any sin which may not be traced to one of those seven, or to their progeny.]
>
> (208-209)

Though difficult to trace exactly the author's immediate sources in this imagery, it is evident that he used certain homiletic writings which had already adapted and revised the bestiaries, rather than these moralized natural histories themselves. As Bloomfield shows, it was the patristic writers who presented sin in the guise of wilderness animals:

> In the main, the desert fathers considered sin an objective power. Evidence that they did so is found in many stories preserved in the Vitae patrum, in which the fathers see specific sins in the forms of animals that live in the wilderness.[35]

Owst points out, further, that the animals of the bestiaries had undergone a metamorphosis by the time of the Ancren Riwle, for while a beast had represented in the former a particular vice or virtue reflected in its nature, in the Riwle, the vice itself has become the beast.[36] It may be noted also that the interest in the Riwle's portrayal lies only in static animal portraits conveying the nature of the sins. Such a portrayal represents an evolution of allegorical instruction from a representation of moral concepts in conflict to a

---

[35] Bloomfield, Seven Deadly Sins, p. 61.

[36] Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 89.

representation of their nature. Adolf Katzenellenbogen discusses these two methods of allegory:

> Early Christian poetry adapted the classical theme of the conflict of armed forces to the sphere of moral allegory, developed it further and endowed the opposing moral forces with the clearly defined features of personifications speaking, acting and struggling with one another. Artists also used the traditional battle scenes as a basis for dynamic representations of the conflict between virtues and vices. This picture cycle originated in the 5th century and survived right through the Middle Ages as an expression of the struggle in man's soul. . . . In the other group, moral concepts are represented as types, without being shown in conflict . . . . These static representations of virtues and vices flourished from the ninth century onwards. Unlike the battle scenes, they no longer show traces of the confusion and excitement of the Early Christian era, but they come to be permeated and elaborated by the subtle mode of thought of the theologians. While the first group demonstrates the necessary practical settling of issues between good and evil, the second group gives the observer theoretical insight into the essential nature of those forces and their relations to one another.[37]

It is in the manner of this second group that the animals lurking in the wilderness of the Ancren Riwle elucidate the instruction on the seven capital sins. But though the figures themselves take part in no significant action, there is a pervasive insinuation of the harms these animals might work against the unwary. Through this implied aggressiveness, the animal imagery invites the desired moral response of watchfulness and resistance.

In homiletic tradition as in art, the vices are often illustrated by the results they bring about.[38] According to this convention,

---

[37] Adolf Katzenellenbogen, Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1964 [1939]), Intro., p. vii.

[38] Cf. Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century, trans. Dora Nussey (New York: Harper & Row, 1958 [1913]), pp. 98-130.

the misfortunes of people guilty of sin are presented as an example and a deterrent to other potential sinners. Such portraits of distorted human types in the Ancren Riwle depict the fate of those who, having fallen prey to the "beasts of the wilderness," now serve in the devil's court.[39] Appropriately, the service each figure provides for the devil pertains to the particular sin by which each was undone. To the proud man is allotted the task of trumpeter:

> Pe prude beoð his bemares, draweð wind inward of worldlich hereword, ⁊ eft, mid idel ȝelpe, puffeð hit utward, ase þe bemare deð, uorte makien noise--lud dream to scheauwen hore horel.
>
> [The proud are his trumpeters; they draw in the wind of worldly praise, and then, with vain boasting, puff it out again, as the trumpeter doth, to make a noise--a loud strain of music to shew their vain glory.]
>
> 210-11)

No such proud trumpeter will be saved, the author points out, when God's trumpeters shall blow in the four quarters of the world before the awful judgment! Those who are envious become jesters who

> ne kunnen seruen of non oðer gleo, buten makien cheres, ⁊ wrenchen mid hore muð, ⁊ schulen mid hore eien. Of þis mestere serueð þeo uniselie ontfule iðe deofles kurt, to bringen o leihtre hore ontfule louerd.
>
> [know of no other means of exciting mirth but to make wry faces, and distort their mouth, and scowl with their eyes. This art the unhappy, envious man practiseth in the devil's court, to excite to laughter their envious Lord.]
>
> (210-13)

These scowls which they show in the physical world are a preview of the rueful looks they will have when they enter into the anguish of hell. In this manner, the portraits continue, each figure's service

---

[39] The "devil's court" is another concept traceable to the dualism which recognized a "God" of evil. It refers here to those who have sinned, so that "in respect to God they are slain; but they live to the fiend, and are all in his retinue, and serve him in his court" (122).

of the devil in this world ironically determining a corresponding torture in hell. The wrathful men who perform before the devil with their sharp and cutting words will be made the objects of those sharp points themselves:

> Auh heo bodieð hwu þe deoflen schulen pleien mid ham, mid hore scherpe aules, ⁊ skirmen mid ham abuten, ⁊ dvsten ase enne pilche-clut, euchon touward oðer, ⁊ mid helle sweordes alsnesien ham puruhut, þet beoð kene ⁊ keoruinde, ⁊ ateliche pinen.
>
> [And it forebodes how the devils shall play with them, with their sharp awls, and skirmish about with them, and toss them like a pilch-clout every one towards another, and strike them through with hell-swords, which are keen, cutting, and horrible pains.] (212-13)

The sluggard among men seems to have been given an easy service in this world, for he

> lið ⁊ slepeð iðe deofles berme, ase his deore deorling; ⁊ te deouel leieð his lutel adun to his earen, ⁊ tuteleð him al þet he euer wule.
>
> [lieth and sleepeth in the devil's bosom, as his dear darling; and the devil applieth his mouth to his ears, and tells him whatever he will.] (212-13)

Assurance is soon forthcoming, however, that these idlers shall be fearfully startled on doomsday, and "ine helle wondrede ateliche awakien" [awaken in terrible amazement in hell] (214-15). In his haste to gather gold and silver and all earthly goods, the covetous man provides such mirth for the devil that the latter "lauhweð þet he to bersteð" [laugheth so that he bursteth] (214-15). He becomes the devil's ash-gatherer, blinded by his own "ashes"--the temporal goods which are the object of his desires. In a medieval colloquialism the author reminds us that all earthly goods shall become "tadden ⁊ neddren" [toads and adders] (214-15) to him, for even his kirtel and covering, in the end, "schulen beon of wurmes" [shall be of

worms] (214-15). The greedy glutton is portrayed as

> þes feondes manciple. Uor he stikeð euer iðe celere, oðer iðe kuchene. His heorte is iðe disches; his pouht is al iðe neppe; his lif iðe tunne; his soule iðe crocke.
>
> [the devil's purveyor; for he always haunts the cellar or the kitchen. His heart is in the dishes; all his thought is of the tablecloth; his life is in the tun, his soul in the pitcher.]
>
> (214-15)

The glutton's fate in hell involves a mockery of this surfeit in food and drink. His punishment causes the reader to recoil with repugnance: "Lif þe gulchecuppe weallinde bres to drincken, ⁊ ȝeot in his wide þrote þet he aswelte wiðinnen" [Give the tosspot molten brass to drink, and pour it into his wide throat, that he may die inwardly] (216-17). But if the glutton's penalty in hell is mildly revolting, the lot apportioned to lechery is thoroughly disgusting. Because the lecher, on earth, "bifuleð himself fulliche, ⁊ alle his feolawes, ⁊ stinkeð of þet fulðe, ⁊ paieð wel his louerd, mid tet ilke stinkinde breð" [foully defileth himself, and all his fellows, and stinketh of that filth, and pleaseth his lord with that same stinking odour], the devil in hell "schal bidon ham ⁊ pinen ham mid eche stunche iðe pine of helle" [shall befoul them, and punish them with never ending stink in the torments of hell] (216-17). This portrait intimates, again, the disdain with which devotional literature of the Middle Ages depicts lechery. The author maintains that, of all others, "habbeð þeos þet fuluste mester iðe ueondes kurt þet so bidoð ham suluen" [they have the foulest office in the devil's court who thus befoul themselves] (216-17).

Unlike the animal images of the seven capital sins, these human types require an interpretation of action. Here an entire

performance illuminates the nature of the individual sins by means of analogy with their characteristic punishments. The full implications of falling into sin are conveyed through

> hwuche mesteres þeo ilke men seruеð iðe deofles curt, þet habbeð iwiued o þeos seouen heggen, ⁊ hwui heo beoð swuðe uorto hatien ⁊ to schunien.
>
> [the offices which the men who have married these seven hags serve in the devil's court, and why they are greatly to be hated and avoided.]
>
> (216-17)

Designedly, these portraits evoke an abhorrence for the seven capital sins even while they elucidate their nature.

By means of allegorical images involving contemporary figures, animal similitudes and human types, the author of the Ancren Riwle intensifies his instructions on sin. It might be observed here, that though the images are graphically revolting, yet they are aesthetically interesting. This seeming contradiction is discussed by Bloomfield as follows:

> The medieval author had to portray vices as enemies of mankind (and he believed them to be), yet he took joy in his task. . . . The Sins were fascinating, and still are. Make no mistake, however: the medieval writer (and medieval man in general) believed in their power, and even though he may have been artistically kind, morally he was afraid.[40]

It should be noted, further, that these negative figures are not presumed to be a sufficient deterrent to sin, but are accompanied by positive instruction in virtue. By making attractive that which should be espoused, the author reinforces again his moral purpose in the heinous portrayal of sin. This subtle augmentation indicates a

---

[40] Bloomfield, Seven Deadly Sins, p. 67.

realistic perception of human nature, for though he is idealistic in his demands for perfection, he recognizes man's propensity for sinning. As he states early in the treatise: "Pe heorte is a ful wilde best, and makeð monie wilde lupes" [The heart is a full wild animal, and makes many wild leaps] (48-49).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Riwle's allegorical imagery illustrates a method of moral instruction where elucidation and persuasion are of prime importance. Although the unidentified author displays a high level of literary competence, his principal purpose in composing the treatise remains didactic. While his instructions reflect a warmth and compassion, set forth as they are in so pleasing and attractive a manner, yet they serve practical interests and display practical wisdom.

As has been shown, many of the images are the commonplace figures of Biblical literature or of earlier moral writings. The representations have no innate moral significance but only the symbolism that tradition has allotted them. In searching out the background of these images one finds a great variation of symbolic meanings, often diametrically opposed in the case of a single figure. This variety of symbolism in both literature and art serves to enrich the traditional moral instruction. It should be remembered that these illustrations result from the ingenuity of individual homilists and artists in portraying religious concepts. In the Riwle, as in other moral writings, such images are carefully placed in a context or setting where no possibility of misunderstanding may occur. The author's imaginative talents augment the portrayal

of these conventional figures, not only molding them to fit the circumstances of the anchorite life, but also adapting them to suit the explication he intends to make. Since the mere mention of a figure, as we have seen, is not necessarily enough to conjure up the tropological meaning, the practice of regularly explicating an image becomes an important characteristic of his work. A final example from the Riwle will serve to illustrate conclusively the necessity of such an explanation for its effective use in moral allegory. In Part VII, "Of Love," the author compares the love of God to "Greek fire."[1] His analogy involves the use of inflammable chemicals in medieval warfare, but the image also draws heavily on myth, as his account indicates:

> Grickischs fur is imaked of reades monnes blode: and tet ne mei noðing bute migge, and sond, and eisil, ase me seið, acwenchen. Þis Grickische fur is þe luue of ure Lourde: and 3e hit schulen makien of reades monnes blode, þet is, Jesus Crist i-readed mid his owune blode oðe rode.
>
> [Greek fire is made of the blood of a red man, and it is said that nothing can quench it but urine, and sand, and vinegar. This Greek fire is the love of our Lord, and ye shall make it of the blood of a red man, which is, Jesus Christ reddened with his own blood on the cross.]
>
> (402-403)

---

[1] Morton gives the following footnote: "Greek fire 'seems to be a composition belonging to the Arabian chemistry; and was very much used in the wars of the middle ages, both by sea and land. It was a sort of wild-fire, said to be inextinguishable by water, and chiefly used for burning ships, against which it was thrown in pots or phials by the hand. Anna Comnena has given an account of its ingredients, which were bitumen, sulphur, and naptha. It is called feu gregois in the French chronicles and romances.'-- Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 169. Ed. 1824." (402). This incendiary material, so named from its first use by the Greeks of Byzantium, probably consisted of various mixtures of petrol products, which would account for its ability to burn in or on water.

Devising an analogy between divine love and this phenomenon of warfare, he shows the anchoresses that once they are inflamed with the love of God, they must stay away from the elements which might quench it. These elements--urine, sand and vinegar--are each given an appropriate explication. Urine is "stench of sunne" [stench of sin] (403-404); it is described as "stinckinde ulesshes luue" [stinking carnal love] (406-407) which may quench divine love. Having allotted urine this significance, he urges upon the sisters purity of heart, asking rhetorically, "nis he wod, oðer heo, þet luueð to swuðe hire owene ulesshs, oðer eni mon ulesshliche" [is not he or she mad who loveth too much her own flesh or any man carnally] (406-407). The second element, sand, quenches the fire of love because "o sond ne groweð no god, and bitocneð idel: and idel acoaldeð ⁊ acwencheð þis fur" [on sand nothing good groweth, and it betokeneth idleness; and idleness cooleth and quencheth this fire] (403-405). Using a succinct, commonplace simile to vivify his moral, he urges the anchoresses to be active in good works, enkindling in this manner the fire of divine love in opposition to the flame of sin:

> Vor, al so as on neil driueð ut þen oðerne, al so þe brune of Godes luue driueð brune of ful luue ut of þe heorte.
>
> [For, as one nail driveth out another, so doth the flame of the love of God drive the fire of foul desire out of the heart.]
>
> (404-405)

Vinegar, the final element to be avoided, makes an emotional appeal through its association with the passion of Christ. After showing at length that vinegar was all the thanks offered to Christ on the cross after everything he had done for mankind, the author explains

how this "vinegar" of ingratitude quenches divine love:

> Þis eisil of sur heorte, and of bitter þonc ouer alle oðer þinges acwencheð Grickischs fur: þet is, þe luue of ure Louerd: and hwose hit bereð ine breoste touward mon, oðer touward wummon, heo is Giwes make. Heo offreð 3et God þis eisil, and þuruh fulleð, onont hire, Godes þine o rode.
>
> [This vinegar of a sour heart and of bitter thanks, more than all other things, quencheth Greek fire, that is, the love of our Lord; and she who beareth it in her breast toward man or woman is the Jew's mate. She is still offering to God this vinegar, and completing, for her part, his sufferings on the cross.]
>
> (404-405)

The author urges his anchoresses not to quench the fire of divine love through these ingredients, but rather to cast the fire of this love upon their enemies as the combatants of a medieval battle cast Greek fire upon their foe:

> Mon worpeð Grickischs fur upon his fomen, 7 so me ouerkumeð ham: and 3e schulen don al so, hwon God areareð ou of eni uo eni weorre.
>
> [Men cast Greek fire upon their foemen, and thus conquer them; and ye should do the same when God raiseth up any war against you from any enemy.]
>
> (404-405)

Through this analogy, the Christian injunction to love one's enemies[2] is graphically illustrated. While it would be incorrect to say that the interpretation of the figure is forced, there can be no doubt that the author's explication is necessary in order to convey the analogy.

---

[2] Luke 6.27-29: "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who calumniate you. And to him who strikes thee on the one cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away thy cloak, do not withhold thy tunic either." See also Matthew 5.39-48; 1 Peter 3.9.

This picturesque prose enables the author to achieve his didactic purpose in a fascinating and pleasurable manner. That the Ancren Riwle enjoyed wide circulation in the centuries following its composition has been shown by Hope Emily Allen. From her extensive research on various aspects of the Riwle Miss Allen concludes:

> In all, therefore, we have seven fourteenth century copies of the Riwle still extant, in one form or another. The present quotations would seem to show that many copies of the Ancren Riwle must have circulated in the fourteenth century, and that the treatise must have enjoyed at that time a popularity as great as that of a new work.[3]

Six years later Miss Allen reaffirms the Riwle's popularity and indicates again the extent of its influence:

> From the evidence presented in this article and my earlier one it is evident that the Ancren Riwle enjoyed a prodigious popularity in mediaeval England for at least three hundred years.[4]

Its value in the history of English prose has been pointed out by R. W. Chambers, who maintains that its imagery preserves the native tradition of the homiletic prose originating in the Old English devotional works.[5] Concurring with Miss Allen's statements regarding

---

[3] Hope Emily Allen, "Some Fourteenth Century Borrowings from Ancren Riwle," MLR, 18 (1923), 7.

[4] Allen, "Further Borrowings from Ancren Riwle," MLR, 24 (1929), 15.

[5] Chambers, Continuity of English Prose: ". . . the Ancren Riwle and its group is an outgrowth of the homiletic tradition of the Twelfth Century, which itself is based upon Aelfric--who, in his turn, deliberately built upon the foundations laid by Alfred" (p. cxxiv). See also R. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, pp. 147-48.

borrowings from the Riwle, Chambers shows that Dr. Wm. Lichfield (d.1448) used its imagery freely when he wrote his 3,083 sermons. The sermon on the "Five Senses," for example,

> is deeply indebted to the Ancren Riwle: in fact, Dr. Lichfield--and here I am quoting Miss Allen--in "page after page rifles the rich treasure of imagery in the Riwle, sometimes borrowing intact, sometimes altering, or using his borrowings as a point of departure." We have, indeed, "what may almost be called another text of Books II and III of the Ancren Riwle."[6]

It is also generally recognized that English secular literature was influenced by the religious allegories such as those of the Ancren Riwle. In describing literary activity after the Norman Conquest to about 1250, when English was the language of only the lower classes, Baugh says:

> It would be useless to look in [this period] for romances and other types popular at the court. These were being produced in French, the language of the class to which poets looked for patronage. Since writing in English was bound to be without material rewards to the writer, we must look to the clergy for most of what was intended for the common people. It is not surprising, therefore, to find English writings at this date predominantly religious, representing the efforts of those in the Church to instruct the people in Bible story and in the ways of right living.[7]

Gilson summarizes the continuity of these devotional works with the profane literature as follows:

> The mystical literature of the twelfth century harmoniously completes the profane and crowns it, and was soon to reform it to its own image.[8]

---

[6] Chambers, Continuity of English Prose, p. xciv.

[7] Kemp Malone, and Albert C. Baugh, The Middle Ages, p. 112.

[8] Gilson, The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, p. 2.

In dealing with the literary activity of the later Middle Ages, Owst ascertains definitively:

> In the Middle Ages, at all events, writers of popular allegoric verse and drama went to no exalted sources, to no elegant trouvère or hoary commentator for their apparatus and ideas. To trace their Castles and their Ships to the Roman de la Rose or some other work of romance is wholly gratuitous and absurd. They drew them naturally, let it be repeated, from the very phrases of popular homiletic discussion circulating around them, whence came . . . much else that is characteristic of their repertory.[9]

Bloomfield's evidence with respect to the seven deadly sins corroborates this view, for it shows that the concept appears first in homily, then in the religious poetry, and finally in the drama.[10] Jusserand maintains deprecatingly that it is owing to the influence of these allegories

> that so many shadows, men-virtues and men-vices, were to tread the boards of the medieval stage, and the strange plays called Moralities were to enjoy a lasting popularity.[11]

Indeed, the vices and virtues along with other religious and philosophical concepts had become such well-known allegorical figures that later writers could hardly speak of them without personifying them. It was perfectly natural, therefore, for Spenser and others

---

[9] Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 13.

[10] Bloomfield, Seven Deadly Sins, p. 93.

[11] J. J. Jusserand, A Literary History of the English People from the Origins to the Renaissance (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 84.

to personify the abstractions in their writings, as Rosemund Tuve points out:

> We see, then, that a man of the 1580's, or earlier, or later, who wished to make the virtues an important vehicle of his thought would find it unnatural to avoid certain inherited bodies of material and traditions for treating them. These obviously still lively traditions were classical in their inception (or thought to be) but were changed and vivified and made all the more congenial by developments during Christian times, which were no longer separable from the resulting amalgamations.[12]

Despite these obvious influences, however, the homiletic allegories such as those found in the Ancren Riwle are not the same as the subsequent, or perhaps more correctly, the consequent allegories of later, secular literature. In the evolution of the secular tradition, allegory tended to move towards a representation of abstract ideas as a clever, intriguing literary form. Unlike the allegory of the devotional works, where the analogies are carefully explicated, these literary allegories are often open-ended with regard to interpretation. In The Visionary Landscape, Paul Piehler comments on this open-endedness, discussing, among other works, the Pearl poem:

> In interpreting the poem today, the first problem the critic is called upon to decide is whether the "pearl" is primarily a who or a what . . . . The status of the pearl maiden is scarcely less disputed than that of Dante's Beatrice, and the dispute develops on very much the same lines. Are we to see the maiden as the poet's dead daughter, or is she merely an allegory of some theological virtue that the poet is or ought to be seeking?[13]

Allegorical imagery in the devotional works of the Middle Ages was

---

[12] Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, p. 76.

[13] Paul Piehler, The Visionary Landscape (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), p. 154.

successful because of a certain unity of convention enjoyed by the people to whom it was addressed. When this unity ceased to exist, that is, when the concluding explications were habitually omitted and the images of the Christian traditions no longer familiar, then the implications of the allegorical figures were largely lost upon the reader. Tuve points out that in Spenser or Lodge, for example,

> we are expected to be sufficiently aware of how fables work--and sufficiently alert--to see the "moral" double meaning almost as soon as we embark on the description or tale.[14]

Murin shows that this was no longer feasible even in Spenser's own day. Taking into account Spenser's thorough study and extensive knowledge of Chaucer and his contemporaries, Murin explains:

> From his study of older poetry Spenser had learned values quite alien to his contemporaries, and these values manifested themselves in a style still more alien to normal modes of speech. He could hardly expect an enthusiastic response from his audience, when both his style and his point of view differed so radically from the ordinary. The more he attempted to carry on the traditional functions of poetry, the more barriers he set up which blocked his way to the achievement of these ends.[15]

This difference of literary convention becomes even more pronounced in modern works where attempts are made to use the symbolism of the old tradition. Northrop Frye points this out graphically in his discussion of symbols:

> When a critic meets St. George the Redcross Knight in Spenser, bearing a red cross on a white ground, he has some idea what to do with this figure. When he meets a

---

[14] Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, p. 11

[15] Michael Murrin, The Veil of Allegory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 88.

> female in Henry James's The Other House called Rose Armiger with a white dress and a red parasol, he is, in current slang, clueless. It is clear that a deficiency in contemporary education often complained of, the disappearance of a common cultural ground which makes a modern poet's allusions to the Bible or to Classical mythology fall with less weight than they should, has much to do with the decline in the explicit use of archetypes.[16]

Our difficulty with the implications of medieval moral allegory, however, involves more than a change in literary convention or the disappearance of a common cultural ground. Our inability to comprehend fully such religious allegory envelopes an entire change of vision from that of the Middle Ages, as Charles Baldwin shows:

> Medieval symbolism . . . is a general poetic habit of vision. Its ordinary allegory, indeed, typifying the seven deadly sins or the seven liberal arts in verse or sculpture or illumination, is much the same as ancient or modern personification of War, or Industry, or Power; but it has distinctive character in a preoccupation with vision, in a poetic habit of looking through the transitory things of sense toward the unseen eternal. . . . Modern symbolism, unable to appeal to such a general habit, runs far greater risk of extravagance and obscurity. It has the medieval appeal only where poet and audience think in the same tradition.[17]

As suggested in Chapter I above, allegorical imagery such as that found in the Ancren Riwle is the product of a specific mentality. Artistic and clever literary descriptions though they may be, the images give evidence of deep religious fervour. In his edition of the Sixth and Seventh Parts of the Ancrene Wisse, Shepherd comments

---

[16] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New York: Atheneum, 1967 [1957]), p. 101.

[17] Baldwin, Three Medieval Centuries of Literature, pp. 175-76.

that this work shows "as does no other early writing in English--the temper and intensity of the noblest aspirations of English people in the twelfth century."[18] Probably the key to an understanding of this fervour lies with one central Christian doctrine: a firm belief in the vanity of this life and the transitory nature of this world, along with an unshakable hope of attaining perfect bliss in the world to come. This tenet of Christian faith is voiced succinctly by the Riwle's author in the morning prayer which he recommends to his anchoresses. When they have risen and dressed, they are told to think upon God's flesh and blood which is over the high altar, to fall on their knees towards it, and say:

> Ave principium nostre creacionis! Ave precium nostre redempcionis! Ave viaticum nostre peregrinacionis! Ave premium nostre expectacionis!
>
> [Hail, thou author of our creation! Hail, thou price of our redemption! Hail, thou who art our support during our pilgrimage! Hail, O reward of our expectation!]
>
> (16-17)

In expanded form, this doctrine regarding immortality is set out again as part of the instruction on watchfulness and diligence. The author says:

> Eihte þinges nomeliche munegeð ⁊ laðieð us to wakien i sume gode, ⁊ beon wurchinde--þis schorte lif--þes stronge wei--vre god þet is punne--vre sunnen þet beoð so monie--deað þet we beoð siker of ⁊ unsiker hwonne--þe sterke dom of domesdei--⁊ so neruh mid alle. . . . þe seoruwe of helle . . . hu muchel is þe mede iðe blisse of heouene.
>
> [Eight things especially admonish and invite us to be watchful and diligent in some good work--the shortness of this life--the difficulty of our way--the small amount of our merits--the great number of our sins--the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the time--the severe doom of the day of judgment, which is also so strict . . . the pains of hell . . .

---

[18] Shepherd, Ancrene Wisse, Intro., p. ix.

> the greatness of the reward in the blessedness of heaven. (144-45)

From this perspective, the matters of the spirit necessarily overshadowed the concerns of the flesh, and the things of this world, good or bad, diminished in value by virtue of their transitory nature. Death was seen as nothing less than the deliverance into eternal joys--the arrival after the long journey, the victory after unrelenting efforts to protect the castle, the ultimate release from a long and strenuous combat. This religious frame of mind, along with the tradition of homiletic instruction, form the basis for a comprehension of medieval moral allegories such as those of the Ancren Riwle. Describing the mentality of the Middle Ages, Margery Morgan writes:

> The material they have to meditate upon, conventional though it may be carries the whole significant burden of their faith, love, and aspiration. They dwell upon it, think in its idiom; when they write, given literary ability they will not simply reproduce the material they inherit, but will transform it with just the intensity of their apprehension. Yet forms of expression, their very vocabulary, seem to a great extent inevitable, so completely are they identified with traditional concepts.[19]

Above all else, the allegorical imagery of the Ancren Riwle is intended for edification. While the various figures clarify the instructions through their graphic presentation and explication, more essentially they tend to move the will towards a desirable moral reponse. The images create an abhorrence for temptation and sin, and an attraction towards virtue and prayer; occasionally they arouse terror in order to persuade towards repentance and penitence. The author's realism in relating the imagery to contemporary situations

---

[19] Margery M. Morgan, "A Talking of the Love of God and the Continuity of Stylistic Tradition in Middle English Prose Meditations," RES, 3 (1952), 97.

makes his lessons immediately relevant. His reference to accepted authors, along with the use of familiar images and traditional methods of presentation, procure authority for his moral instructions.

In adopting this colourful method of instruction, the author is directly in line with the oldest traditions of moral literature. The importance of teaching by delighting goes back at least as far as the Old Testament, where we read in Ecclesiastes:

> And whereas Ecclesiastes was very wise, he taught the people, and declared the things that he had done: and seeking out, he set forth many parables. He sought profitable words, and wrote words most right, and full of truth.[20]

This important principle of pedagogy is well understood by the author of the Riwle, for his pleasing manner of presentation makes his moral lessons appealing as well as lucid. Collectively, the allegorical imagery of the Ancren Riwle constitutes a figurative mode of expression which is the immediate heritage of Christian homiletic tradition. Whatever this imagery may represent to the modern mind, to the medieval mentality it was a serious and effective prose of instruction.

---

[20] Ecclesiastes 12.9-10. It might be commented here that although the sermon literature of the present day habitually uses far less allegorical imagery than is apparent in the Middle Ages, the persuasive dimension is still carefully pursued. In his work entitled The Preaching Word (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965), Otto Semmelroth, S. J., says: "Let us point out how important is the proper effort of the preacher to find a good, persuasive and moving form for his words . . . . The preacher who is by nature unskilled or who is too burdened with other tasks may of course be tempted to put his trust too much in the idea that the simple reading of the gospel works like a sacrament, and that his efforts over his sermon are therefore not particularly necessary. Such a view must be characterized as untenable. . . . [T]o bring about . . . . personal effort and proper disposition is of course the special task of the well preached content of the sermon" (pp. 201-202).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY

The Ancren Riwle: A Treatise on the Rules and Duties of Monastic Life. Ed. and trans. James Morton. London: Camden Society, 1853. [British Museum Cotton Ms. Nero A. 14, collated with British Museum Cotton Ms. Titus B. 18 and British Museum Cotton Ms. Cleopatra C. 6]

The French Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. J. A. Hebert. London: Oxford University Press, 1944. EETS 219. [British Museum Cotton Ms. Vitellius F. 7]

The Latin Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. Charlotte D'Evelyn. London: Oxford University Press, 1944. EETS 216. [Merton College, Oxford, Ms. 44, and British Museum Cotton Ms. Vitellius E. 7]

The English Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. Mabel Day. London: Oxford University Press, 1952. EETS 225. [British Museum Cotton Ms. Nero A. 14]

The English Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. R. M. Wilson. Intro. N. R. Ker. London: Oxford University Press, 1954. EETS 229. [Gonville and Caius College Ms. 234/120]

The "Ancrene Riwle." Trans. M. B. Salu. Intro. Dom Gerard Sitwell. Preface, J. R. R. Tolkien. Notre Dame, Indiana: The University Press, 1955. [Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Ms. 402]

The English Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. A. C. Baugh. London: Oxford University Press, 1956. EETS 232. [British Museum Ms. Royal 8 C. 1]

The French Text of the "Ancren Riwle." Ed. W. H. Trethewey. London: Oxford University Press, 1958. EETS 240. [Trinity College, Cambridge, Ms. R. 14.7, with variants from Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. Fonds francais 6276 and Ms. Bodley 90]

Ancrene Wisse: Parts Six and Seven. Ed. Geoffrey Shepherd. London: Nelson, 1959. [Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Ms. 402]

Ancrene Wisse. Ed. J. R. R. Tolkien. Intro. N. R. Ker. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. EETS 249. [Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Ms. 402]

The English Text of the "Ancrene Riwle." Ed. Frances M. Mack. Together with The Lanhydrock Fragment. Ed. A. Zettersten. London: Oxford University Press, 1963. EETS 252. [British Museum Cotton Ms. Titus D. 18, and Bodleian Ms. Eng. Th. c. 70]

The Nun's Rule Being the "Ancren Riwle" Modernised by James Morton, Rpt. from the Camden Society Volume. Intro. Abbot F. A. Gasquet. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966. [British Museum Cotton Ms. Nero A. 14, collated with British Museum Cotton Ms. Titus D. 18 and British Museum Cotton Ms. Cleopatra C. 6]

II. SECONDARY

A. BOOKS

Altaner, Berthold. Patrology. 2nd ed. Trans. Hilda C. Graef. New York: Herder & Herder, 1961.

Anderson, M. D. Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches. Cambridge: The University Press, 1963.

Art and Mankind: Larousse Encyclopedia of Byzantine and Medieval Art. Gen. ed. René Huyghe. New York: Prometheus Press, 1968 [1963].

Baldwin, Charles Sears. Three Medieval Centuries of Literature in England: 1100-1400. Boston: Little, Brown, 1932.

Benham, Allen Rogers. English Literature: From Widsith to the Death of Chaucer. New York: Phaeton Press, 1968 [1916].

Bloomfield, Morton W. The Seven Deadly Sins. Michigan: State College Press, 1952.

Burlin, Robert B. The Old English Advent: A Typological Commentary. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Butler, Cuthbert. Western Mysticism. New York: Dutton & Co., 1923.

The Cambridge History of English Literature: From the Beginnings to the Cycles of Romance. Vol. I. Ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. Cambridge: The University Press, 1963 [1907].

Chambers, R. W. On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School. EETS 186A. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

The Catholic Encyclopedia. 15 vols. Ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911.

Cirlot, J. E. A Dictionary of Symbols. Trans. from Spanish, Jack Sage. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

Clement, Clara Erskine. A Handbook of Legendary and Mythological Art. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1873.

Cook, G. H. English Monasteries in the Middle Ages. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961.

Coulton, G. G. Life in the Middle Ages: Monks, Friars and Nuns. Vol. IV. Cambridge: The University Press, 1930.

Curtius, Ernst Robert. European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.

Daniélou, Jean, S. J. The Bible and the Liturgy. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956.

Dantis Alagherii Epistolae. Trans. Paget Toynbee. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920.

Dickinson, J. C. Monastic Life in Medieval England. London: A. & C. Black, 1961.

Early Middle English Texts. Ed. Bruce Dickins and R. M. Wilson. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1956 [1951].

English Spiritual Writers. Ed. Charles Davis. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Fables of Aesop. Trans. S. A. Handford. Illus. Brian Robb. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969 [1954].

Ferguson, George. Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, with illus. from Paintings of the Renaissance. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Fletcher, Angus. Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode. New York: Cornell University Press, 1967 [1964].

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. New York: Atheneum, 1967 [1957].

Gasquet, Abbot F. A. English Monastic Life. London: Methuen, 1904.

Gelin, Albert, S. S. The Concept of Man in the Bible. Trans. David M. Murphy. Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1967.

Gilson, Etienne. The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard. Trans. A. H. C. Downes. London: Sheed and Ward, 1955 [1940].

Gordon, Ian A. The Movement of English Prose. London: Longmans, Green, 1966.

A Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities. 2nd ed. Printed by order of the Trustees. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921.

Hall, J. Early Middle English, 1130-1250. Parts I & II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920.

Hodgson, Geraldine E. English Mystics. London: Mowbray, 1922.

The Holy Bible, Douay Version. Trans. from the Latin Vulgate 1609. New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1950.

Huizinga, J. The Waning of the Middle Ages. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. (Doubleday Anchor Books). 1954 [1924].

Inge, William Ralph. Christian Mysticism. New York: World Publishing Co., 1964 [1956].

_____ Studies of English Mystics: St. Margaret's Lectures, 1905. London: Murray, 1906.

Jobes, Gertrude. Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols. Parts I & II. New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1962.

Jusserand, J. J. A Literary History of the English People from the Origins to the Renaissance. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909.

Katzenellenbogen, Adolf. Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1964 [1939].

Ker, W. P. Medieval English Literature. London: Oxford University Press, 1945.

Kelly, Amy. Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings. New York: Random House, 1950.

Klingender, Francis. Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Knowles, David. The English Mystical Tradition. London: Burns & Oates, 1961.

Knowles, David. The Religious Orders in England. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.

Langland, William. Piers the Ploughman. Trans. J. F. Goodridge. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971 [1959].

Le May, Sister Marie De Lourdes. The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in English Literature. Washington: Catholic University of America, 1932.

Legge, M. Dominica. Anglo-Norman in the Cloisters: The Influence of the Orders upon Anglo-Norman Literature. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1950.

The Letters of Abelard and Heloise. Trans. from Latin, C. K. Scott Mancrieff. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942.

Lewis, C. S. The Allegory of Love. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1936].

Life and Works of Saint Bernard. Cantica Canticorum: Eighty Six Sermons on the Song of Solomon. Vol. IV. Ed. Dom John Mabillon. Trans. and ed. with Additional Notes, Samuel J. Eales. London: John Hodges, 1896.

A Literary Middle English Reader. Ed. Albert Stanburrough Cook. Boston: Ginn, 1915.

The Literature of England. An Anthology and a History: From the Beginnings to the Romantic Movement. Vol. I. Ed. George B. Woods et al. Toronto: Gage, 1941 [1936].

MacQueen, John. Allegory. London: Methuen and Co., 1970.

Mâle, Emile. The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century. Trans. from 3rd ed. (1913), Dora Nussey. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.

Malone, Kemp, and Albert C. Baugh. The Middle Ages in A Literary History of England. Vol. I. Gen. ed. A. C. Baugh. New York: Appleton, 1967 [1948].

McKenzie, John L., S. J. Dictionary of the Bible. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965.

_____ The Power and the Wisdom: An Interpretation of the New Testament. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965.

Miliken, E. K. English Monasticism Yesterday and Today. London: Harrap, 1967.

Milosh, Joseph E. Hilton's "Scale of Perfection" and the English Mystical Tradition. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

Murrin, Michael. The Veil of Allegory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Owst, G. R. Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1933.

_____ Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c.1350-1450. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1926.

Piehler, Paul. The Visionary Landscape. London: Edward Arnold, 1971.

The Portable Medieval Reader. Assembled & illuminated, James Bruce Ross & Mary Martin McLaughlin. New York: The Viking Press, 1960 [1949].

Quasten, Johannes. Patrology: The Beginnings of Patristic Literature. Vol. I. Utrecht-Antwerp: Spectrum Publishers, 1966 [1950].

_____ Patrology: The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus. Vol. II. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1964 [1953].

_____ Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon. Vol. III. Utrecht/Antwerp: Spectrum Publishers, 1966 [1960].

Schiller, Gertrud. Iconography of Christian Art. Vols. I & II. Trans. Janet Seligman. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1971 [1966].

Schofield, William Henry. English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer. London: Macmillan, 1914.

Semmelroth, Otto, S. J. The Preaching Word. New York: Herder & Herder, 1965.

Severs, J. Burke. A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500. Vol. II. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970.

Seznec, Jean. The Survival of the Pagan Gods. Trans. Barbara F. Sessions. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.

Smalley, Beryl. The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952.

Sweet, Henry. First Middle English Primer: Extracts from the "Ancren Riwle" and "Ormulum." 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959 [1st ed. 1884].

Thomas, P. G. English Literature before Chaucer. London: Edward Arnold. 1924.

Tuve, Rosemond. Allegorical Imagery. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

_____. Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968 [1947].

Varty, Kenneth. Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1967.

Wells, John Edwin. A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400. 8 Supplements. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1926-1941.

White, T. H. The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts being a translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960 [1954].

Wilson, R. M. Early Middle English Literature. 3rd ed. London: Methuen, 1968 [1st ed. 1939].

Wimsatt, James I. Allegory and Mirror. New York: Western Publishing Co., 1970.

The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Song of Songs I. Vol. II. Trans. Kilian Walsh. Intro. M. Corneille Halflants. Spencer, Massachusetts: Cistercian Publications, 1971.

The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. 2nd ed. Ed. F. N. Robinson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957 [1933].

Zesmer, David M. Guide to English Literature: From Beowulf through Chaucer and Medieval Drama. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961.

Zettersten, Arne. Studies in the Dialect and Vocabulary of the "Ancrene Riwle." Lund Studies in English, No. 34. Lund: Gleerup, 1965.

B. ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Allen, Hope Emily. "The Origin of the Ancren Riwle." PMLA, 26 (1918), 474-546.

Allen, Hope Emily. "Mystical Lyrics of the Manuel des Pechiez." Romantic Review, 9 (1918), 154-93.

_____. "A New Latin Manuscript of the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 14 (1919), 209-210.

_____. "The Ancren Riwle and Kilburn Priory." PMLA, 16 (1921), 316-22.

_____. "Another Latin Manuscript of the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 17 (1922), 401.

_____. "Some Fourteenth Century Borrowings from Ancren Riwle." MLR, 18 (1923), 1-8.

_____. "On the Author of the Ancren Riwle." PMLA, 44 (1929), 635-80.

_____. "Further Borrowings from Ancren Riwle." MLR, 24 (1929), 1-15.

_____. "The Localisation of Bodl. Ms. 34." MLR, 28 (1933), 485-87.

_____. "The Ancren Riwle and Geoffrey of Monmouth." MLR, 29 (1934), 173.

_____. "Eleanor Cobham." [Letter to the Editor]. Times Literary Supplement, 22 March 1934, p. 214.

_____. "The Tortington Chartulary." [Letter to the Editor]. Times Literary Supplement, 14 Feb. 1935, p. 92.

_____. "The Three Daughters of Deorman." PMLA, 50 (1935), 899-902.

_____. "The Ancren Riwle." [Letter to the Editor]. Times Literary Supplement, 24 Oct. 1936, p. 863.

Bethurum, Dorothy. "The Connection of the Katherine Group with Old English Prose." JEGP, 34 (1935), 553-64.

Bögholm, N. "Vocabulary and Style of the Middle English Ancrene Riwle." English Studies, 19 (1937), 113-16.

Caplan, Harry. "The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Mediaeval Theory of Preaching." Speculum, 4 (1929), 282-90.

Chambers, R. W. "Recent Research upon the Ancren Riwle." RES, 1 (1925), 4-23.

_____. "Notes and Observations," (On McNabb). RES, 2 (1926), 85-89.

Chambers, R. W. "Notes and Observations," (On McNabb). RES, 2 (1926), 198-99.

Clark, Cecily. "A Mediaeval Proverb." English Studies, 35 (1954), 11-15.

Colledge, Eric. "The Recluse: A Lollard Interpolated Version of the Ancren Riwle." RES, 15 (1939), 1-15; 129-45.

Coulton, G. G. "'The Origin of the Ancren Riwle' (Allen, PMLA, 26 (1918), 474-546." MLR, 15 (1920), 99-100.

_____ "The Authorship of Ancren Riwle." MLR, 17 (1922), 66-69.

Dobson, E. J. "The Affiliations of the Manuscripts of Ancren Wisse." English and Medieval Studies presented to J. R. R. Tolkien on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday. Ed. Norman Davis and C. L. Wrenn. London: Allen & Unwin, 1962, 128-63.

Dymes, Dorothy M. E. "The Original Language of the Ancren Riwle." Essays and Studies, 9 (1924), 31-49.

Frank, Robert Worth, Jr. "The Art of Reading Medieval Personification-Allegory." English Literary History, 20 (1953), 237-50.

Ives, D. V. "The Proverbs in the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 29 (1934), 257-66.

Kaske, R. E. "Eve's 'Leaps' in the Ancrene Riwle." Medium Aevum, 29 (1960), 22-24.

Knowlton, E. C. "Notes on Early Allegory." JEGP, 29 (1930), 159-81.

Macaulay, G. C. "The Ancren Riwle." MLR, 9 (1914), 63-78; 145-60; 324-31; 463-74.

Magoun, Francis P., Jr. "Ancrene Wisse vs. Ancren Riwle." English Literary History, 4 (1937), 112-13.

McNabb, Vincent. "The Authorship of the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 11 (1916), 1-8.

_____ "Further Light on the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 15 (1920), 406-409.

_____ "Further Research upon the Ancren Riwle." RES, 2 (1926), 82-85.

_____ "Further Research on the Ancren Riwle." RES, 2 (1926), 197-98.

Morgan, Margery M. "A Talking of the Love of God and the Continuity of Stylistic Tradition in Middle English Prose Meditations." RES, 3 (1952), 97-116.

Napier, Arthur S. "A Fragment of the Ancren Riwle." JEGP, 2 (1898), 199-202.

Paues, A. C. "A XIVth Century Version of the Ancren Riwle." Englische Studien, 30 (1902), 344-46.

Prins, A. A. "On Two Proverbs in the Ancrene Riwle." English Studies, 29 (1948), 146-50.

Samuels, M. L. "Ancrene Riwle Studies." Medium Aevum, 22 (1953), 1-9.

Shepherd, Geoffrey, "'All the Wealth of Croesus . . .': A Topic in the Ancren Riwle." MLR, 51 (1956), 161-67.

Thurston, H. "Notes and Observations," (On McNabb). RES, 2 (1926), 199-201.

Tolkien, J. R. R. "Ancrene Wisse and Hali Meiðhad." Essays and Studies, 14 (1928), 104-26.

Trethewey, W. H. "The Seven Deadly Sins and the Devil's Court in the Trinity College Cambridge French Text of the Ancrene Riwle." PMLA, 65 (1950), 1233-46.

Whiting, B. J. "Carleton Brown's English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century." [Review Article]. Speculum, 9 (1934), 219-225.

_____ "Proverbs in the Ancren Riwle and the Recluse." MLR, 30 (1935), 502-505.

Whitman, Charles Huntington. "The Birds of Old English Literature." JEGP, 2 (1898), 149-98.

Williams, Irene F. "The Language of the Cleopatra Ms. of the Ancren Riwle." Anglia, 28 (1905), 300-304.

APPENDIX

INDEX OF IMAGERY

(based on the Morton edition)

The broad categories and headings are listed in alphabetical order but the images under each heading are in chronological order according to their appearance in the treatise.

CATEGORIES OF IMAGERY

ABSTRACTIONS 132

ANIMAL 133

BODY 135

COLOUR 136

CONTEMPORARY ACTIVITIES 137

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS 137

PERSON (specific) 141

PERSON (social types) 143

PLACE 144

PLANT 145

RELIGIOUS LIFE 146

TANGIBLE THINGS 147

WARFARE 149

WAYFARE 150

ABSTRACTIONS:

AFFLICTIONS
God's ambassadors, 191
God's messenger, 191-93
CONVERSATION
Grinding of wheat or grit, 71
Water pent up at the mill-dam, 73
Word slaying more than the sword, 75
Unrestrained: like a city without walls, 75
like an unbridled horse, 75
a drop waxing into a great flood, 77
DARKNESS
Dark night, symbol of ignorance, 17, 33, 37
FEAR
"Nether" of two grindstones representing confession, 333
NIGHT
Symbol of privacy, 153
SHADOW
Image of this world's misery compared with misery of hell, 191-93
Image of this world's goods, 197
Worldly pains and joys as shadow of pains of hell and joys of heaven, 243
Shadow of God on hills, in contrast to his footsteps on the mountains, image of the higher and lower life, 381
SICKNESS
Fire to cleanse the elect, 183
Physician of the soul, 183
Goldsmith who gilds crowns, 183
SILENCE
Foster-mother of many words, 73
Tillage of righteousness, 79
SPEECH
Spear of wounding word, 61
Evil speech: poison being vomited, 81, 83
from unwashed mouths, 83
SUFFERING
Of this world as shadow of suffering of hell, 191-93
THIRST
Christ's yearning for the health of our souls, 115
VOICE
Not heard by God, if it savours of the world's babbling, 77
Sweet voice, loved by Christ in his spouse, 99
Lean pelican, voice of the recluse, 127

ANIMAL:

GENERAL
Heart as a wild animal, 49
Beast as man who does not use his reason, 59
Anger transforming man into beast's nature, 121
Wild beasts of the wilderness, 197-99, 209, 211
Dumb beasts united against enemy, image of united hearts of the anchoresses, 253
ASS
Christians in as great thraldom as, 23
Unwise soul of those who restrain not their words, 75
Figure of pride, 211
Devil figure, 297
Having ass's ears, symbol of the curious anchoress, 173
BEAR
Sloth, with whelps, 203
Devil figure, 297
BIRDS:
GENERAL
Untamed bird in cage, figure of peering anchoress, 101
Figure of anchoresses who dig not downward with their lusts but fly high to their nests, 131-35, 141
COCK
Brave on his own dunghill, symbol of flesh on earth, 141
CHOUGH
Robs hen of eggs as devil bears away good works of cackling anchoresses, 67
EAGLE
Deposits precious stone in nest for protection, 135-37
Foes swifter than, 197
HEN
Cackling anchoress figure, 67
MAGPIE
Figure for gossip, 89
NIGHT BIRD
Under the eaves, compared to anchoress, 141-45, 147, 153
Night raven under the eaves, 153
PELICAN
Testy anchoresses or peevish recluses, 119
Lean, characteristic of recluse's austerity, 127, 133, 141
In the wilderness, recluse who keeps private her good deeds, 153, 175
RAVEN
Image of backbiter, 85
Night raven under the eaves, 153
SPARROW
Chattering and solitary, image of praying, solitary anchoresses, 153, 175
Falling sickness of, applied to humility of anchoresses, 177
BOAR
Devil figure, 281

CAT
Of hell, devil figure clutching at anchoress, 101-103
CALF
Symbol of flesh, 137-39
DEER
Choicest meat, symbol of anchorite life, 197
DOG
Anchoress who revolts at offences, 123
Devil figure, 289-91, 325-27
FOX
False anchoress, 129
Covetousness, with whelps, 203
Samson's foxes, image of disunited brethren, 255
GOAT
Heard of, lusts of the flesh, 101
Kids, the five senses, 101
HORSE
Bridled, as tongue should be, 75
Anchoress above the sea of this world, upon the bridge of heaven, 243
Being ridden by the devil, image of temptation, 267-69
INSECT
Gnat and fly image, 9, 11
Locust, canker-worm, palmer-worm as symbols of sin's consuming power, 303
LAMB
Raging wolves clothed in lambs' fleeces, 67
One aspect of Christ as judge, 305
LION
Christ as lion of the tribe of Judah, 47
Angry man, 121
Devil figure, 165
Pride, with whelps, 199-201, 211, 223
Bold as, against temptations, 275
One aspect of Christ as judge, 305
OSTRICH
Fleshy, image of carnal anchoress, 133
OX
Christians in as great thraldom as, 33
SCORPION
Lechery, with progeny, 205, 207-209
A woman, 207
SERPENT
Backbiter figure, 83-85, 89
Anchoress who replies in kind to angry words, 123
Envy, with brood, 201, 211, 223
SHEEP
Silence of Christ during crucifixion, 123
Troubled by fox of covetousness, 203
SWINE
Pent up in sty, in contrast to recluse shut up in anchorage, 127
Cubbel to swine as clod of heavy earth (body) to soul, 141
Greediness (Gluttony), with brood, 205

UNICORN
Angry man, 121
Wrath, with whelps, 201, 211
WOLF
Raging wolf clothed in lamb's fleece, 67
Angry man; she-wolf, angry woman, 121

BODY:

GENERAL
Deeds of body ruled by outward rule, 5
Body as house of soul, 33, 379
Fat and frolicsome calf, 137-39
Worm which gnaws and destroys itself, 139
Mud and dirty earth, 139
Clod of heavy earth tied to the soul, 141, 173
Potential lightness of wind and brightness of sun, 141
At home on earth as cock is on dunghill, 141
Woman's flesh, a brittle vessel, 165-67
Insubordinate servant, unless beaten, 177
Inn where Christ takes up lodging in Holy Communion, 269
Servant which devil urges not to be chastised for wrongdoing, 269
Vessel whose contents should be examined as antidote to pride, 277
Our kirtle, 363-65
BLOOD
As sin, 119
CHEEKS
Two grindstones in conversation, 71
FIVE SENSES:
GENERAL
Watchmen to the heart, 15, 49, 105, 117
Wounding the soul, 27
Bondservants to the anchoress, their lady, 173
EARS
God's ear nigh the supplicant's tongue, image of God hearing prayers, 77
Itching ears, as desire to hear worldly talk, 81
EYES
Window, 49, 51, 63, 71
Immodest eye as messenger of unchaste heart, 61
Arrows and first arms of lechery's stings, 61
Offence of eye as prelude to offence of thought and deed, 63-65
Inward eyes, 93
Toward sheltering wood, 97
Fountain of tears to allay God's threats, 157
Bright eyes of God, 195

MOUTH
Portal to man's soul and entrance to his heart, 75
Vomiting poison, image of evil speech, 81
Unwashed mouths, image of evil speech, 83
Unclean lips, man who has sinned through speech, 159
TONGUE
Clapper in conversation, 71
Organ to be bridled as a horse is bridled, 75
God's ear nigh the supplicant's tongue, image of God' hearing prayers, 77
Itching tongue, desire to speak worldly talk, 81
Cradle to the devil's child, 83
Venomous, belonging to backbiter, 89
Rod, to smite the dog of hell, 325-27
NOSE
Stench of hell vs. celestial odours, 105-107
Fragrance of God, comforting heart rather than nostrils, 107
Offensive smell of lecherous, 217
Sweet smell of good works, 313
Virtues sweet smelling in the nostrils of God, 341
TOUCH
Sword of deadly handling, 61
Threefold sting endured by Christ on the cross, 111
Touch of love, making all things one's own, 408-409
HAND
Right hand, symbolizing good works, 147-49
Holding of hands, image of united resistance against temptation, 253
HEAD
God as head, we as his members, 361-63
HEART
Conduct of, related to inward rule, 3
Guarded by five senses as watchman, 15, 49, 105, 117
Thoughts of, 29
Breast as bower, 35
Wild animal, 49
Personified as escaping through the windows of the eyes, 51
Flits away with a flitting word, 77
Life of the soul, 49, 119
Bosom, symbolizing privacy, 147
God's chamber, 93
Nest, 135, 137
Stepping out, will be led to gallows-tree of hell, 175
Swelling with the mind's consent to carnal pleasure, 275
Wounds of, 275-77

COLOUR:

BLACK
Symbol of no estimation with the world without, 51
Symbol of those doing penance, 51

Colour of the devil, 235
GREEN
Symbolizing blessedness of heaven, 133
Symbol of God's grace, 151
Green way, the easy way which leads to hell, 189
RED
Symbol for martyrs, 51
Colour of humiliation, 357
WHITE
Symbol for maiden purity and pure chastity, 51
BLACK OR WHITE
Symbol of indifference regarding dress of anchoress, 419
BLACK, WHITE, GREY
Combination of, symbol of disagreement among orders, 11

CONTEMPORARY ACTIVITIES:

BARTER
Exchange of oats and wheat in place of money, symbol of acceptance by God, 313
BLOODLETTING
Image of the healing of vices, 113-15
Contrast to Christ's death, 259
GRINDING WHEAT
Analogy with holy conversation, 71
WINNOWING
Image of separating good from bad, 271, 73

(See also PERSON, Social Types; RELIGIOUS LIFE; WARFARE; WAYFARE)

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS:

CHURCH
Ship, 143
Spouse of Christ, 397
CONFESSION
Effective enemy of the devil, 299, 301
Washing powers, 299, 301, 325
Symbolized by Judith casting off widow's dress, 299-303
Widow cleaning her house, 315
Showing deadly wounds to physician, 315
Men in a ship stopping the leaks, 315
Grindstone, 333
Eraser, 345
GRACE
Not sold, but freely given, 369
Preserving grace amidst pleasures, ease, and carnal abundance, 369-71

HEAVEN
A kingdom, 41, 149
Drawn up in battle array, 93
View of, as secret medicine, 93-95
Large pasture of delight, 95
A treasure, 151
A great feast, 189
HELL
The Pit, 117
Gallows tree, 185, 189
MYSTICAL BODY
Christ as head, we as members of his body, 361
SIN:
GENERAL
Making heart and conscience rugged, 5
Bound by the chain of, 23
Prayer to cleanse soul from fleshly sin, 39
Symbolized by blood, 119
Debts to our Lord, 127
Poison of, 135-37
Like consuming of locust, canker-worm, mildew, palmer-worm, 303
Warfare upon God, 311-13
The devil's money, 327
The devil's muddy fen, 329
ANGER
Blinding the heart from the truth, 121
Sorceress who changes man's countenance and transforms him to a beast, 121
Angry woman, a she-wolf, 121
Angry man, a wolf, lion, or unicorn, 121
BACKBITING
Devil's blast and his own voice, 83
Greedy raven, 85
Devil's dirt man, 85, 89
Devil's serpents, 89
COVETOUSNESS
Fox, with whelps, 203
Covetous man as devil's ash-gatherer, 215
Contrast to Christ's poverty, 261
DESPAIR
Greyhound to the devil as huntsman, 333-35
ENVY
Serpent, with brood, 201
Envious men as devil's jesters, 211-13
FLATTERY
Devil's blast and his own voice, 83
Blinding man, 83, 87
Servant in the devil's privy, 85, 89
The world's flattery, Judas's kiss, 195
GOSSIP
Magpie, 89

GREEDINESS (Gluttony)
Swine, with pigs, 205
Greedy glutton as devil's purveyor, 215
Contrast to the gall Christ received on the cross, 261-63
Root of bitterness, 417
LECHERY
Foul harlot fighting Lady Chastity, 61
Warrior of hell, 61
Herd of goats, lust of the flesh, 101
Scorpion, with progeny, 205, 207-209
Devil's beast, 207-209
The lecherous who defile themselves in the devil's court, 217
Lust of flesh as foot wound, 195, 275
PRESUMPTION
Greyhound to the devil as huntsman, 333-35
PRIDE
Lion, with whelps, 199
Proud men, devil's trumpeters, 211
SEVEN DEADLY SINS
Seven chief deadly sins and all their brood, 29
Their foul progeny, 195
Classified under the three foes of the devil, the world, and the flesh, 197
Seven hags, 217
(See also the individual sins)
SLOTH
Bear, with whelps, 203
Idle man, devil's bosom-sleeper, 213-15
In contrast to Christ's resurrection, 250
Iron lying still, gathering rust, 423
Water not stirred, beginning to smell, 423
WRATH
Unicorn, with whelps, 201
SOUL
Widow, 11
House of, to receive Christ in Holy Communion, 33
Falling sick, 51
Heart is life of, 119
Stranger and prisoner on earth, 141
Spouse of Christ, 291-93, 395
Vineyard to be tilled, 297
Christ as the soul's "husband," 369
TEMPTATION
The devil's storms, 143, 247
File to take away rust, 185
Rod of chastisement, 185-87
Carnal, as foot wound, 195, 275
Spiritual, as breast wound, 195
Three foes of man, the devil, the world, and the flesh, 197
Wind of strong temptations, 217
Small drops wearing through flint on which they fall, 221
Foes lying in ambush, 221
Storming a city, 223; town or castle, 245-47

Devil's boxes full of his electuaries, 227
Devil's vials, 227
Strength of, compared to wind on a high tower, 227
Castle siege, 229, 233
Our Lord playing with the soul as the mother with her child, 231-33
God bearing temptation along with the anchoress, 233
Army of the fiend, 233, 263-65
Proving the soul as gold in the fire, 237
A thirst to be suffered rather than to accept the Devil's sweet drink of sin, 239
An irritation to be suffered rather than to rub and suffer the smarting afterwards, 239
Arrows and sword, 251
Resistance to temptation: holding together as armies in battle, 251-53
united hearts, as people join hands for mutual support, 253
clod sticking fast not blown by wind, 253-55
handful of rods not easily broken, 255
Of thought, spitting black spittle to render the soul unfit to be embraced by Christ, 289
Spark to be quickly extinguished, 297

VIRTUE
GENERAL
High degree of, compared to high hill, 179
Fair flowers in the eyes of God, 341
CHARITY
As inward rule, 3
Twelve branches which blossom, 31
Fire of, kindled by the love of our Lord, 125
Love of that which is dear and precious, 409
Chamberlain, counsellor and bride to Abraham, 411
CHASTITY
Personified as Lady Chastity attacked by the foul harlot, lechery, 61
GOOD DEEDS
The fig tree, 149-51
Treasure, 151
GOOD WILL
As a shield, 393
HOPE
Sweet spice within the heart, keeping it sound, 79-81
Strength in wrestling against temptations, 81
Upper of two grindstones representing confession, 333
HUMILITY
Mother of all virtues, 279
Sleight in wrestling by which the devil might be overthrown, 281
Ignominy: as one arm of the ladder reaching to heaven, 355
as one wheel of Elijah's chariot, 357-59
connected with the redness of humility, 357-59

PAIN
One arm of the ladder reaching to heaven, 355
One wheel of Elijah's chariot, 357
RIGHTEOUSNESS
Field to be tilled by silence, 79
VIRGINITY
Precious liquor in frail vessel, 165-67
WISDOM
Mother and nurse of all virtues, 373

PERSON (specific):

BETHSHEBA
Type of those who lose their virtue through exposing the body, 57
CHRIST
Treasure of the world, 19
Limbs adorned cross as pearls, 19
Vanquisher of satan, 43
Lion of the tribe of Judah, 47
Root of David, 47
True sun, 51, 247
Brighter than sun, 99
Precious stone of eagle's nest, 135-37
Example to anchoress in his retreat to the wilderness, 161
Glad friend, awaiting the anchoress's arrival in heaven, 189
Spouse of anchoress, 219
Judge, as lion and lamb in contrast, 305
King in tale of knightly chivalry, 389-93
Christ, Our Lord: King of glory, 25
good wine to inebriate the heart, 33
bashful wooer, 91
beloved bridegroom, 115
compared to mother playing with her child, 231
stone of help in temptation, 265
tower of true safety, 265
castle of strength, 265
the soul's "husband," 369
fairest thing, 399
richest king, 399
of noblest birth, 399
wisest of the wealthy, 399
most courteous of men, 399
most liberal of men, 399
Christ, synonymous with God and the Creator Spirit:
author of our creation, 17, 33
price of our redemption, 17, 33
support during our pilgrimage, 17, 33
reward of our expectation, 17, 33
our help, 19, 21
jealous God, 91

THE DEVIL
Fiend of hell, 53, 75, 105, 161, 179, 211, 213, 229, 237, 247, 249, 257, 263, 265, 273, 289, 299, 301, 395, 421, 427
Warrior of hell, 61, 229, 247
Serpent in paradise, 66
Pedlar, 67
Liar, 83
Wiles of, 93
Cat of hell, 101-103
Symbolized by Saul, 129-31
Lion of hell, 165
Hellish adversary, 179
Sorcerer, 193
Assaults of, 197
Court of, 211
Traitor of hell, 223, 225
Wicked leech of hell, 227
Army of devils, image of temptations, 233
Attacking dragon, 247
Old ape, 249
Rider who tempts man to bow down that he may pass over but gains the back of the sinner and rides him, 267-69
Deceiver, 273
Cowardly champion, striking at the feet, lust of the flesh, 275
Ensnarer or trapper, 279
Giant of hell, wrestling with Christ, 281
Boar, 281
Dog of hell, 289-93, 325-27
Huntsman with greyhounds, despair and presumption, 333-35
Chapman of hell, 419
DINAH
Type of those who lose their maiden honour through beholding, 55, 103
ESTHER
Type of those who intercede with others, 147, 171
Type of the hidden anchoress, 171-75
EVE
Example of sinning through eyesight, 53-55
Symbol of mankind lying in prison four thousand years and more, 55
Symbol of those who trifle with temptation by talking too long, 67
ISH-BOSHETH
Allowing reason to sleep, symbol of those who guard themselves poorly against temptation, 271-73, 275
JUDITH
Model of ascetic recluse, 127, 131, 139
Slayer of Holofernes who symbolizes the devil's strength, 137-39
Casting off of widow's clothing, symbol of confession, 299-303
MARY MAGDALENE
Symbol of bitter spice, remorse and amendment for sin, 373
MARY, MOTHER OF JACOB
Symbol of bitter spice, wrestling and struggling against temptation, 375

MARY SALOME
Symbol of bitter spice, longing for heaven and weariness of this world, 375
THE VIRGIN MARY
Root of Jesse, 41
Gate of heaven, 41, 43
Star of the sea, 43
Handmaid of the Lord, 43
Example of care in speech, 67, 77, 161
Example of the solitary life, 161
REBECCA
Image of God's grace in a lonely place, 155
SAUL
Symbol of the fiend, 129-31
SHEMEI
Type of the outward anchoress, 173-75

PERSON (social types):

AMBASSADOR
Of God, in guise of affliction, 191
BEGGAR
Who bears bags on back, compared to God's spouse, 167-69
BURGESSES
Who bear purses, compared to God's spouse, 167-69
CHRISTIANS
In as great thraldom as an ox or ass, 33
FOES
Three categories, the devil, the world, the flesh, 197
Image of temptation, 221
GOLDSMITH
Sickness, which purifies the soul, 183
Putting gold in fire, purification of soul through temptation, 237
HERDSMEN
Unfaithful spouse sent with goats beside herdsmen's tents, 101
KING
Christ as knight in chivalrous tale, 389-93
KNIGHT
Who robs his own vassals, 87
King in tale of chivalry, image of Christ, 389-93
LADY
Object of the chivalrous knight-king's love, image of the soul, 389-93
MERCER
Compared to pedlar making more noise crying his soap than the mercer all his valuable wares, 67, 153
MESSENGER
From God, in guise of affliction, 191
To God, in form of prayer, 265

NOBLEMEN
Gentlemen who carry no packs, compared to God's spouse, 167-69
ORPHAN
Through sin, 11
PEDLAR
Making more noise crying his soap than rich mercer all his valuable wares, analogy with cackling anchoress, 67, 153
Personification of devil showing counterfeit wares, 67
PILGRIM
The good pilgrim, one type of God's elect, 349-51
SMITH
Right skilful smith forging full weak knife, image of old recluse doing foolish things, 53
God as smith, forging his elect, 285
THIEF
Seeking refuge in church like anchoress seeking refuge in anchorage, 175
WOMAN
As pit which should remain covered, 59
Of the Apocalypse, symbol of mankind striving to achieve heaven, 167
Scorpion, 207-209

PLACE:

CASTLE
Siege of Lady Chastity by the harlot, lechery, 61
Siege, image of temptation, 229, 233
Not attacked after it is taken, 229
Resistance to storming, image of how to resist temptation, 245-47
God as tower of true safety and castle of strength against temptations, the devil's army, 265
Yielding up the castle, image of giving in to temptation, 267
CAVE
Figure of anchorage, which may be used as shelter or as a place to be befouled, 129-31
CITY or TOWN
Without walls, figure of those who do not restrain their words, 75
Not attacked after it is taken, 229
Resistance to storming as image of how to resist temptation, 245-47
FIELD
Wide range of the will, 103
HILL
Life of exalted piety, 179, 197
In contrast to mountains, hills symbolize those who lead the lower life, 381

INN
The body, where Christ takes up lodging in Holy Communion, 269
JERUSALEM
Symbol of monastery, 173-75
Kingdom promised to the elect, 197-99, 209
MOON
Emblem of worldly things, 167
MOUNTAINS
Symbol of those who lead the highest life, 381-83
NEST
Religious house, 133-35, 137
RELIGIOUS HOUSE, ANCHORAGE, or MONASTERY
Nest, 135
Jerusalem, symbol of monastery, 173
WILDERNESS
Life of solitude, 157, 159-61, 197
Place of temptation, 161-63
Place through which the Lord's people must journey, symbol of this world, 197
WORLD
A way to heaven or hell, 151
A footstool to reach up to heaven, 167
A wilderness, 197

PLANT:

APPLE
Symbol of all that excites guilty desire and delight in sin, 53-55
BRANCH
Twelve branches of charity, image of virtues stemming from charity, 31
FIG TREE
Peeled, image of those who show their good works, 149-51
FLOWERS
Leaf, flower and bud, image of Christ on the cross, 19
MILDEW
Consuming power of sin, 303
ROOT
Of David, image of Christ, 47
Of Jesse, image of Mary, 41
THORNS
Hardships, 379-81
WHEAT
Grinding of, image of holy conversation, 71
YOUNG TREES
Image of anchoresses planted in God's orchard, 379-81

RELIGIOUS LIFE:

ANCHORESS
Handmaid to God, 45
As dead: may look out of window and consort with sin among the living, 51
may speak with living men, but may not eat with them, 415
Mirror of God, 91
Bride of Christ, 99, 109, 115
Prying, listening, gossiping, prating anchoresses sent out after herds of goats beside herdsmen's tents, image of lusts of the flesh, 101
Untamed bird in a cage, 101-103
Fair one among women and angels, 103
Compared to earth, as remedy against anger, 121
Dog, if she barks at offences, 123
Serpent, if she returns venomous words, 123
Lean pelican, 127, 141, 175
False anchoresses as foxes, 129
Pious recluse as birds, 131-35
Carnal anchoress as ostrich, 133
Night bird under the eaves, 141-45
Anchor under the ship of the Church, 143
Lady with bondservants, the five natural senses, 173
Seeking refuge in anchorage as thief seeks refuge in Church, 175
Falling sickness of sparrow necessary to maintain humility of, 177
Towers cemented together by sisterly love against the winds of temptation, 227-29
Type of God's elect choosing highest degree of virtue in life, 353-55
Young trees planted in God's orchard, fenced round against beasts, 379-81
Life of anchoress: like deer, the choicest meat, 197
solitary life compared to sparrow, 175
ball-play, 219
compared to married life, 219
compared to Jews crossing the Red Sea, 219-21
above sea of this world, upon the bridge of heaven, 243
as being upon the cross, 349
as way of life one degree better than that of pilgrim, 355
highest life, symbolized by mountain, 381-83
"Mary's part," 415

BRIDE
Anchoress, God's bride addressing the bridegroom, 3
Anchoress, bride of Jesus Christ, 99, 109, 115
Sweet voice and fair countenance loved by Christ, 99
Happy anchoress, 109

BRIDEGROOM
Addressed by the anchoresses, brides of God, 3
Jealous spouse, 91
Bashful wooer, 91
Suffering one on Calvary, dumb and deaf, 109
Lord and Saviour of Heaven, Jesus, 115
ENCLOSURE
Gifts of clearness of sight and swiftness in compensation for her darkening herself here, 95
Monastic seclusion, a wilderness, 197
Symbolized by Christ in Mary's womb and in the tomb, 379
ORDER OF ST. JAMES
Order of the three anchoresses, 9
RULE (inward)
Charity, ruling the heart, 3
A lady, 5
Rule of love as lady or mistress, 411
RULE (outward)
Ruling deeds of the body, 5
Handmaid to the lady personifying inward rule, 5
Slave, helping the lady rule the heart, 13
SPOUSE
Lady Chastity, God's spouse, 61
Recluse, spouse of Christ, 91, 99
Compared to beggars who carry bag on back, burgesses who carry purses, and noblemen and gentlemen who carry no packs or purses, 167-69
Specifically the soul, 291-93, 397
Three baths to wash her white and fair, 397
Church as spouse of Christ, 397

TANGIBLE THINGS:

ANCHOR
Anchoress as, 143
ASHES
Symbolizing this world's goods, 215
BRIDLE
As restraint on the tongue, 75
CROSS
Worthy tree, 19
Adorned by the limbs of Christ as by pearls, 19
True safety, 19
Unique among woods for leaf, flower, bud, 19
Christian medicine, to heal sound and sick, 19
Precious wood and admirable sign, 35
Restorer of the world, 41
Shield against the enemy, 293-95, 391-93

FILE
Grievance caused by other men, filing away the contamination of sin, 185, 285
FIRE
Of charity, 125
The devil's brand, fire of lust, 255
Purifying the dross, 285
Spark of temptation, to be quickly extinguished, 297
Fire of illicit love, 297
Remorse for sin, 307
Symbol of the love of God, 401, 427
Greek fire, symbol of divine love, 403
KIRTLE
Shape of, symbolizing moral life, 201
All the flesh, 363-65
MEDICINE
Prayer to be granted godly medicine, 17
Cross as Christian medicine, healing sound and sick, 19
Prayer to heal soul, 27, 29
View of heaven as secret medicine, 93-95
Bearing wrongful deeds as salve, 125-27
One who says he needs none is not aware of his own illness, 179
Prayers, meditations, etc., medicine against carnal temptations, 241
Love and good will, salve against envy, 283
Avoidance of fleshly medicine, 371
MIRROR
Recluse as mirror of God, 91
ROD
Others as God's rod of correction, 185-87
Tongue in confession, as rod to smite the dog of hell, 325-27
RUST
Image of contamination from this world, 159, 185
SALT
Image of wisdom, 139
SAND
Symbol of idleness, cooling divine love, 403
SHIP
Image of Holy Church Universal, 143
SPICES
Hope as a sweet spice within the heart, 79-81
Of King Hezekiah's store-house, compared to good works, 153
Bitter, betokening toilsome labour and mortification of the flesh, 373
As sweetness following bitterness, 375-77
STONES
Agate of eagle's nest, symbol of Christ, 135-37
Treasure, compared to the kingdom of heaven, 151
Precious stones of King Hezekiah's store-house, good works, 153
Severe afflictions of the way of sinners, 191
Stone of help, image of Christ, 263, 297
Precious jewel, blushing of man's face who truly confesses his sins, 331

- URINE
Stench of sin, quenching divine love, 403-405, 407
VINEGAR
A heart sour with malice and hatred, quenching divine love, 403-405
WATER
At the mill-dam, compared to pent-up conversation, 73
As many words in conversation, a drop waxing into a great flood to drown the soul, 77
Small drops wearing through flint, image of persistent temptation, 221
Tears, scalding the devil, 247
WIND
Words as wind, 123-25
Praise of men as vain puff, 149
Winds of temptation, 179, 227-29
Wind of praise, image of pride, 211
Inflating bladder, image of pride, 283

WARFARE:

GENERAL
City without walls which army may enter, symbol of those who do not restrain their words, 75
Assaults of the devil, 197
Assaults of temptations, 221-23
Fight against the world, 239
Temptation and resistance compared to siege of castle or town, 229, 233, 245-47
Resisting the devil in the manner of powerful army, 251-53, 263
Temptations as army of the fiend assailing man, 233, 263-65
All this world as a fight, according to Job, 359
Lady besieged by enemies and aided by Christ as King-knight, 389-93
Greek fire, image of divine love, 403-405
WEAPONS:
ARROWS
Eyes as arrows and first arms of lechery's stings, 61
Devil's bolts, 63
God breaking the devil's bow, 251
Secret temptations, 251
SHIELD
Example of the old as a shield for the young, 53
Heart, shield against the enemy, 293
Cross, shield against the enemy, 293-95
Parts and symbolism of the shield compared to the crucifix, 391-93

SPEAR
Of wounding word, 61
Threefold sting of feeling endured by Christ, 111
SWORD
Of deadly handling, 61
Weapons of the wrathful, 213
Hell swords used by devils against the wrathful, 213
Temptations that cut close and keen, 251
WRESTLING
Against the assaults of the devil, 81
Strategy of devil in temptation, 223-25
Against temptation, 239, 375
Stratagem of, to overcome the devil, 281-83

WAYFARE:

GENERAL
Life as a pilgrimage, 33, 157
Passing of Israel through Red Sea, image of red shame and bitter penitence of confession, 331
Image of God's elect as pilgrims, 349-55

(See also PLACES: WILDERNESS; WORLD)